# REPORT TO THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF BY THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER SOUTH-EAST ASIA

## 1943—1945

VICE-ADMIRAL

THE EARL MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O.

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Return to China of two divisions from N.C.A.C.; Transport aircraft diverted to carry them; Bhamo captured; 36 British Division breaks enemy resistance in the "Railway Corridor"; N.C.A.C. forces cross the Irrawaddy at Shwegu; The MARS Brigade takes over the task of cutting the old Burma Road; N.C.A.C. forces reach the Irrawaddy at two more points; Efficiency of U.S. system of Army/Air co-operation in N.C.A.C. *Page* 104

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Urgent need for sea/air bases in Arakan to supply Fourteenth Army; Preliminary approval received for operation ROMULUS; Inter-service Headquarters set up at Corps level, for directing amphibious operations in Arakan; Lieut.-General Wedemeyer recommends cancellation of Arakan operations, but Chiefs of Staff approve that they should proceed; Offensive opens in Arakan; Capture of Akyab; Capture of Myebon Peninsula, Kyaukpyu, Cheduba, and a bridgehead at Kangaw; 82 West African Division advances southward to contact the Kangaw bridgehead; Slowing-down of amphibious operations, to permit of a firm base being consolidated . . . . . *Page* 107

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Shortage of transport aircraft for supply of Fourteenth Army; Request to the Chiefs of Staff for 140 aircraft; 145 transport aircraft reinforcements agreed; 33 Corps captures Shwebo, and secures bridgeheads east of the Irrawaddy; remainder of 33 Corps reaches the Irrawaddy; 4 Corps advances down the Gangaw Valley, and also reaches the Irrawaddy *Page* 113

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FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1945

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Opening of the Ledo Road; Planning begun for the recapture of Singapore; Combined Chiefs of Staff re-affirm that aid to China is still the primary military object of U.S. policy; Decision to stage a pre-monsoon DRACULA; This decision reviewed in the light of a new Army/Air plan; Lieut.-General Leese considers that the overland thrust can take Rangoon before the monsoon. Decision taken to capture Phuket Island (Operation ROGER), instead of staging DRACULA; A new Corps to be formed for this operation . . . . . . . . . . . . *Page* 121

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Programme for build-up of Arakan as supply base for Fourteenth Army; Gradual withdrawal of 15 Corps from Arakan to ease strain on maintenance; Joint Fourteenth Army/221 Group Headquarters at Kalemyo; Responsibility for airfield construction in Fourteenth Army area; 221 Group is reinforced for support of Fourteenth Army, and its scope is increased . . . . . . . . . . . *Page* 124

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Strong enemy reaction to 19 Indian Division's crossings; Lieut.-General Slim decides that 4 Corps and 33 Corps will cross the Irrawaddy simultaneously; Lieut.-General Kimura re-disposes his forces to meet our attacks; 4 Corps captures Meiktila; Lieut.-General Kimura misappreciates the situation, and prepares to counter-attack Meiktila and liquidate our bridgeheads . . . . . . . . . . *Page* 127

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The Generalissimo asks for immediate transfer to China of MARS Brigade, and early transfer of all U.S. and Chinese forces in N.C.A.C.; Visit to the Generalissimo in Chungking; Generalissimo decides to check advance of Chinese divisions on a line Lashio–Hsipaw: MARS Brigade moves to China; 36 British Division crosses the Shweli at Myitson; The division reaches Kyaukme, where it comes under command of Fourteenth Army, and then turns towards Mandalay; Chinese divisions halt on the Lashio–Hsipaw line—and operations in N.C.A.C. virtually cease; Acute transport aircraft problem causes sustained rates to be doubled; Chiefs of Staff give preliminary approval to ROGER and to the assault on Malaya (Operation ZIPPER); Naval assistance for ROGER not available from British Pacific Fleet; Chiefs of Staff recommend that ROGER should not be started until the fall of Rangoon is imminent . . . . . . . . . . . *Page* 132

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Mandalay captured; Clearance of the Mandalay Plain begun; Japanese counter-attacks at Meiktila driven off; Myingyan captured, and the Taungtha area cleared; Lieut.-General Kimura orders a general withdrawal; Sustained rates exceeded. *Page* 139

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Distribution of arms to the Burma Defence Army; Officers of Force 136 informed that armed rising against the Japanese is contemplated; Internal security aspects of supporting Resistance movement; Political decisions to remain my responsibility; Armed rising of the B.D.A. discovered to be imminent; Maximum support ordered; Chiefs of Staff informed of my decision, and their approval requested; Approval to support the rising received; Burma Defence Army rises against the Japanese on the 28th March. . . . . . . . *Page* 142

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Army/Air plan, for the overland thrust to Rangoon, now behind schedule; a modified DRACULA is called for; An emergency amphibious assault ordered, with D-Day not later than the 5th May; Operation ROGER thereby delayed; Detailed planning for DRACULA begins, and is given over-riding priority; Forces for DRACULA withdrawn from Arakan; Liberation of Arakan completed by 82 West African Division . . *Page* 145

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Improvement in the land lines of communication; Air-supply still essential for Fourteenth Army's advance; Air and Ground Supply Committee set up to recommend further improvements; 221 Group close-support squadrons organised on a highly mobile basis; Operational squadrons extensively re-grouped; Fourteenth Army re-groups for the final thrust; Main thrust, down Mandalay–Rangoon railway axis, allotted to 4 Corps; Thrust down the line of the Irrawaddy allotted to 33 Corps; 33 Corps captures the Yenangyaung oilfields area, and the key town of Prome; 4 Corps makes rapid advance down the railway axis; Pyinmana and Toungoo group of airfields secured; Lieut.-General Kimura moves to Moulmein, and orders evacuation of Rangoon; Japanese forces re-grouped to hold Pegu; 4 Corps captures Pegu, but is checked by pre-monsoon rains. *Page* 147

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DRACULA beats the monsoon by a few hours; Rangoon found to be clear of Japanese. . . . . . . *Page* 155

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Forces from Rangoon link up with Fourteenth Army; Twenty-eighth Japanese Army cut off in the west; 4 Corps difficulties of supply; Rehabilitation of Rangoon port; Air bases established; Plan for assault across the Sittang abandoned; Irrawaddy axis cleared . . . . . . . *Page* 161

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Overall strategical position of the Japanese; Decision to launch ZIPPER in the second half of August; ROGER cancelled; ZIPPER forces withdraw to India to prepare; Expectation of reinforcements from Europe; ZIPPER plan; Schemes for preventing reinforcement of Malaya; Fourteenth Army Headquarters withdrawn to India to control ZIPPER preparations; Twelfth Army formed; Difficulties raised by PYTHON; ZIPPER postponed to first half of September . . . . *Page* 164

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All U.S.A.A.F. units withdrawn from S.E.A.C.; R.A.F. units re-organised; Twelfth Army's tasks; B.N.A. now operating in co-ordination with our forces; Twenty-eighth Japanese Army prepare to break out from the Pegu Yomas; Thirty-third Japanese Army's diversionary attacks across the Sittang; "Battle of the Break-out"; Virtual end of the campaign in Burma . . . . . . . . . . . . *Page* 169

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Extensive new responsibilities and commitments; No Intelligence provided for the new areas; Plans for re-occupation; Re-occupation postponed; Preliminary surrender signed at Rangoon; Sabang, Penang, and Singapore re-occupied; Staging-post established at Bangkok; Inter-service Control Commission flown to Saigon; ZIPPER landings made; The Instrument of Surrender is signed at Singapore . . . . . *Page* 182

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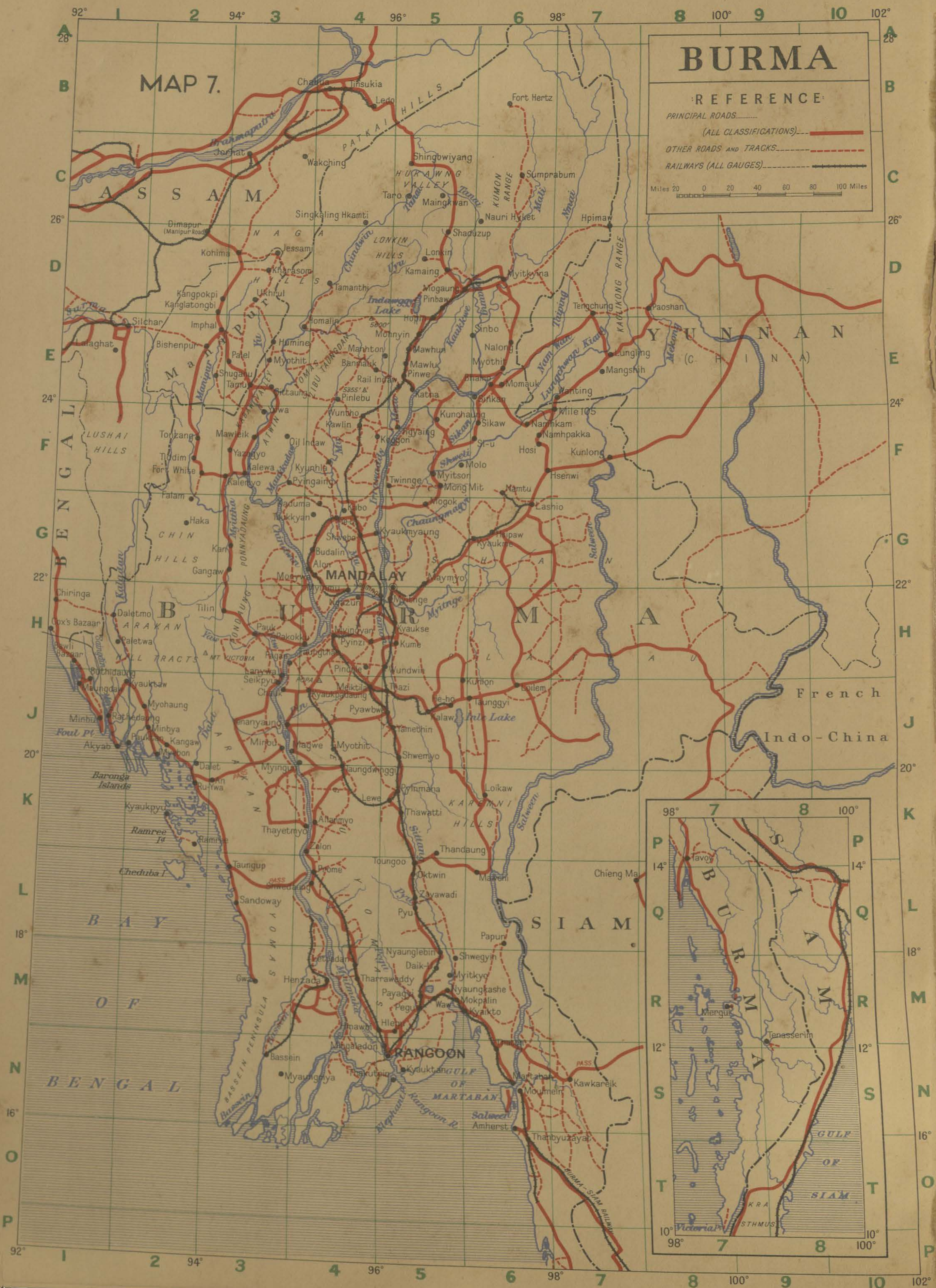
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MAP I.

BOUNDARIES OF S.E.A.C.


MAP 7.
BURMA
REFERENCE
PRINCIPAL ROADS (ALL CLASSIFICATIONS)
OTHER ROADS AND TRACKS
RAILWAYS (ALL GAUGES)
Miles 20 0 20 40 60 80 100 Miles
ASSAM
BENGAL
BURMA
YUNNAN (CHINA)
SIAM
French Indo-China
BAY OF BENGAL
GULF OF MARTABAN
GULF OF SIAM
MANDALAY
RANGOON
Brahmaputra
PATKAI HILLS
NAGA HILLS
LUSHAI HILLS
CHIN HILLS
ARAKAN
KUMON RANGE
KAOLIKONG RANGE
HUKAWNG VALLEY
LONKIN HILLS
KARENNI HILLS
BASSEIN PENINSULA
Chindwin
Irrawaddy
Salween
Sittang
Mekong
Shweli
Myitnge
Indawgyi Lake
Inle Lake
Chabua
Tinsukia
Ledo
Jorhat
Dimapur (Manipur Road)
Kohima
Imphal
Silchar
Tamu
Kalewa
Kalemyo
Tiddim
Fort White
Falam
Haka
Gangaw
Tilin
Pakokku
Myingyan
Meiktila
Thazi
Pyawbwe
Yamethin
Pyinmana
Toungoo
Pegu
Prome
Henzada
Bassein
Myaungmya
Thayetmyo
Allanmyo
Magwe
Minbu
Chauk
Yenangyaung
Taungup
Sandoway
Kyaukpyu
Akyab
Cox's Bazaar
Maungdaw
Buthidaung
Paletwa
Kyauktaw
Myohaung
Ramree Id
Cheduba I.
Baronga Islands
Foul Pt
Shwebo
Monywa
Myitkyina
Bhamo
Katha
Lashio
Hsipaw
Kyaukme
Maymyo
Kyaukse
Hsenwi
Namhkam
Kunlong
Loilem
Taunggyi
Kalaw
Loikaw
Thandaung
Mawchi
Shwegyin
Martaban
Moulmein
Amherst
Kawkareik
Thanbyuzayat
Chieng Mai
Tengchung
Paoshan
Lungling
Mangshih
Wanting
Mile 105
Fort Hertz
Sumprabum
Hpimaw
Shingbwiyang
Maingkwan
Taro
Wakching
Singkaling Hkamti
Tamanthi
Homalin
Mogaung
Hopin
Mohnyin
Naba
Pinlebu
Wuntho
Mogok
Mong Mit
Tavoy
Mergui
Tenasserim
Victoria Pt
KRA ISTHMUS
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(iii) Air Forces;
(iv) U.S. Forces.
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(i) The Japanese High Command;
(ii) Japanese dispositions.

In May, 1943, at the Washington Conference (Trident), the British and U.S. Governments decided to co-ordinate the land and air forces of the British Commonwealth, the U.S. land and air forces, and the British Eastern Fleet, in South-East Asia, which were at that time under three separate Commands. As a result of this decision, I was entrusted, at the first Quebec Conference (Quadrant) in August of the same year, with the formation of the South-East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.); which was to include Burma, Malaya, Sumatra, Ceylon, Siam and French Indo-China,[1] and would be responsible for operational control of all Allied forces in South-East Asia.[2] On the 26th August I reported officially to the U.S. Chiefs of Staff in Washington, who assured me of their full support. General (later General of the Army) George C. Marshall[3] let me have his chief strategic planner, Major-General (later Lieut.-General) Albert C. Wedemeyer, as my Deputy Chief of Staff; General (later General of the Army) Henry H. Arnold[4] gave me Brigadier-General Eugene Beebe as my senior U.S. Air Officer; and Admiral (later Fleet Admiral) Ernest J. King[5] gave me Commodore B. J. Rogers as senior U.S. Naval Officer. Leaving Major-General Wedemeyer in the United States, to deal with the selection of officers for the American component of my inter-Allied staff, I returned to London on the 27th August.

2. On the 1st September I attended a meeting of the British Chiefs of Staff to discuss proposals for the formation of the new Headquarters. The Combined Chiefs of Staff, in their Final Report on the Quadrant Conference[6], had laid down that the Supreme Allied Command, South-East Asia, should be set up as follows:—

(*a*) the Command and staff to be a combined British and American one, on the lines of the North Africa Command;

(*b*) the Supreme Allied Commander to be British, with an American Deputy. He should have under him Naval, Army and Air Commanders-in-Chief, and also a Principal Administrative Officer to co-ordinate the administrative planning of all three services and of the Allied forces;

(*c*) the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and the Commanders of the three services mentioned above, acting under the orders of the Supreme Allied Commander, to control all operations and have under their command such naval, military and air forces as might be assigned to the South-East Asia theatre from time to time.

3. The first point that emerged from an examination of the North Africa Command organisation was that, since in the initial stages of the campaign General Eisenhower was the overall commander of the land forces as well as Supreme Commander, he had a military Headquarters with virtually no naval and air representation on his own staff. The Chiefs of Staff now approved that in South-East Asia, although the component of Naval and R.A.F. officers should not be comparable in size with the army staff, all three services should be represented in every important division of the Headquarters organisation.[7] Most of the senior British staff officers joined in London; Lieut.-General Sir Henry Pownall, chosen to be Chief of Staff, was recalled from his position as Commander-in-Chief, Persia and Iraq Command; Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté was appointed Deputy Chief of Staff (Information and Civil Affairs); and Mr. M. E. Dening, personally selected by Mr. Eden,[8] was appointed Chief Political Adviser.

4. During the month of September, at the skeleton Headquarters which was set up at Combined Operations Headquarters[9], I made an examination of various factors which would be of importance in the new Command. The first of these was the question of Long-Range Penetration (L.R.P.) groups operating behind the enemy lines. At the Quebec Conference, Brigadier (later Major-General) Orde Wingate had presented a plan based on experience gained in 1943, but which would involve a new and more elaborate technique and the employment of a much larger force; and this plan had been approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The Prime Minister[10] had given Brigadier Wingate the privilege of communicating directly with him through myself, and had asked me to do all I could to help him; and at the end of the

[1] See 'A', paragraphs 16 and 17.
[2] See Map 1 (before page 1).
[3] Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.
[4] Commanding General, U.S. Army Air Force.
[5] Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet and Chief of Naval Operations.
[6] See Appendices A and B.
[7] See 'A', paragraph 39.
[8] Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
[9] I was Chief of Combined Operations and so used my old Headquarters in which to form up my new staff.
[10] The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill.

conference I had instructed him to proceed to my Headquarters in London. He now reported to me on his way to India to assemble and train the Special Force which he would need for his projected operations.

5. General Marshall had promised that he would form a special regiment[1] of jungle-trained troops for the L.R.P. Force ; and I discussed this with Brigadier Wingate. I had been greatly impressed (when I met him for the first time on our way to Quebec) by his firm conviction, based on his experiences behind the Japanese lines in 1943, that the Japanese could be beaten in jungle fighting ; and I now encouraged him to continue expanding his technique of air transport into the jungle. I also suggested that a technique should be developed for flying out the wounded and the sick ; and in this connection I was able to tell him that at my request General Arnold had agreed in Washington to provide a special Army Air Force unit[2] for supporting the L.R.P. groups. This unit (which General Arnold proposed to call " No. 1 Air Commando ") would include light inter-communication aircraft (L-1 and L-5) and helicopters ; light bombers, long- and short-range fighters, and gliders ; and Dakota transports fitted to enable them, without landing, to " snatch off " gliders from the ground. On hearing this, Brigadier Wingate told me he was certain that the knowledge, that badly wounded and sick men would no longer have to be left behind the Japanese lines, would make a very great difference to morale.

6. The question of morale was one which I also discussed with Lieut.-General N. M. S. Irwin, who had until recently commanded India's Eastern Army in the operations in Burma ; and the disquieting account he gave, of the effect which eighteen months of continual reverses had had on the spirit of the troops in South-East Asia, made it evident that this matter required immediate attention. Other factors which were examined before I left London included the improvement of lines of communication in Assam and Northern Burma, the effect of the monsoon on operations, and the incidence of tropical diseases. In connection with the last of these, I was able, with the personal backing of the Prime Minister, to set up as part of my staff a Medical Advisory Division, consisting of carefully selected senior British naval, military, air force and U.S. Army doctors, who were specialists in tropical diseases. They were given great latitude, and were instructed to work in close liaison with the medical services and medical research organisations in Delhi, London and Washington.

7. On the 2nd October I left England for New Delhi. My written directive from the Prime Minister[3] had instructed that my Headquarters should be set up there in the first instance, since it would take over elements of the present General Headquarters (India) [G.H.Q. (I.)]. My directive had also instructed me to submit my recommendations as to the ultimate location of my Headquarters, as soon as I had had time to study the problem. (My temporary Headquarters in London was instructed to close down on the 5th October, and was to re-open at Delhi on the 1st November, becoming fully operative on the 16th.) On the 7th October, I reached Delhi with five staff officers : and preliminary discussions were held with the Commander-in-Chief in India, and with my three Commanders-in-Chief : Admiral (later Admiral of the Fleet) Sir James Somerville, General Sir George Giffard and Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Peirse. I instructed Lieut.-General Pownall and Major-General Wedemeyer, who arrived a few days after me, to make a careful examination, in conjunction with the Commanders-in-Chief and the U.S. authorities, of plans for the campaign in Burma, and for the various amphibious operations which QUADRANT had laid down for consideration.

8. Major-General A. W. S. Mallaby, Director of Military Operations, India Command, had warned me in London that liaison between the British and Chinese commands was not satisfactory. I had asked the Prime Minister to appoint a senior officer to represent me at the Generalissimo's Headquarters; and Lieut.-General A. (later Sir Adrian) Carton de Wiart had been selected, with the added status of Prime Minister's representative, subject to the Generalissimo's concurrence in the appointment. But it seemed essential that personal relations between the Generalissimo and myself should be established without delay, and on the 16th October I flew to Chungking to present my compliments. I stayed with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang at Huang Shan, where a series of satisfactory conferences on the co-ordination of strategy between the two theatres was held.[4] The question of liaison between our two Headquarters was also discussed; and the Generalissimo gladly agreed to Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart's appointment, and said that he would appoint a high-ranking officer, with an inter-service staff, to my Headquarters: an

[1] Later known as 5307 U.S. Provisional Infantry Regiment (See 'A', paragraph 73 and Annexure 9.)
[2] He also offered me two fighting aces; and a few days later Colonel Philip Cochrane and Lieut.-Colonel R. Allison were instructed to report to me and raise the unit.
[3] See Appendix C.
[4] See 'B', paragraphs 5–7.

appointment subsequently held by Major-General Feng Yee.[1]

9. At Chungking I met Lieut.-General (later General) Joseph W. Stilwell, who had been appointed my Deputy in South-East Asia. Lieut.-General Stilwell (who had been in the Far East since early in 1942 when he had first commanded the Chinese troops in Burma) already held the appointments of Commanding General of the U.S. Forces in the China-Burma-India (C.B.I.) theatre;[2] Lease-Lend Administrator for China; and Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo, in the latter's capacity of Supreme Commander of the China theatre. I had pointed out to the President, at Quebec, the anomaly of these multiple, and possibly conflicting, appointments; but he had replied that it was his strong personal wish that the closest liaison should be maintained between the China and South-East Asia theatres, and that he considered this could best be done by appointing the Generalissimo's American Chief of Staff to be my Deputy.

10. Lieut.-General Brehon B. Somervell, who had been sent out by the President to inform the Generalissimo officially of the formation of the South-East Asia Command, and to discuss inter-theatre questions with him, told me that the Generalissimo was going to ask the President to recall Lieut.-General Stilwell. I said that I did not wish to proceed with plans for using Chinese forces if the man who had commanded most of them for nearly two years was to be removed just before the operations; and Lieut.-General Somervell conveyed this to the Generalissimo to reinforce his own arguments in Lieut.-General Stilwell's favour.

11. I returned to Delhi on the 22nd October, by way of the Army, Air, Corps, and R.A.F. Group Headquarters, since I wished to supplement at first hand my picture of the overall situation. At Imphal, I visited the Headquarters of 4 Corps[3]; at Chittagong, those of 15 Corps and 224 Group R.A.F.; and at Barrackpore I met Lieut.-General W. J. Slim (later General Sir William Slim), Commander of the newly-formed Fourteenth Army[4], and Air Vice-Marshal T. M. Williams, commanding the Bengal Air Command, R.A.F., who were responsible for the British Empire land and air forces in Burma. In Delhi, I found good progress was being made in setting up the S.E.A.C. group of headquarters, which were understudying and working in close touch with G.H.Q. (I.), from which we were taking over the necessary elements. My three Commanders-in-Chief had set up Headquarters (or elements thereof) alongside my own;[5] and on the 16th November I was able to take over full operational control of South-East Asia Command forces—although I still had to rely for much help on G.H.Q. (I.) in certain branches such as Intelligence and Administration.

12. Owing to the close contact which would have to be maintained with G.H.Q. (I.) during S.E.A.C.'s growth to full independence as a Command, it was advisable to keep my Headquarters at Delhi for the time being. Mr. Churchill had recommended Ceylon[6] as the ultimate location of the S.E.A.C. group of headquarters; and I proposed moving out of India and into the boundaries of my own Command, as soon as communications and accommodation had been prepared to receive us. I favoured moving to Ceylon, not only because it was the nearest point opposite the centre of the Japanese perimeter, and therefore the best from which to control amphibious operations; but also because it already provided the main base and shore headquarters of the Eastern Fleet, and I would consequently have my three Commanders-in-Chief alongside me. I felt very strongly, also, that my Headquarters should be removed geographically from its parent organisation's apron-strings, lest it should become so integrated as to be eventually incapable of uprooting itself when the time came to move to Rangoon or Singapore.

13. Admiral Somerville was understandably greatly in favour of the move; whilst Air Chief Marshal Peirse, while not favouring it, did not in the first instance oppose it. General Giffard opposed it categorically; giving as his reasons, firstly, that owing to the slow provision of necessary staff for his Headquarters, he was dependent on G.H.Q. (I.) for several functions; and, secondly, that Ceylon was even further than Delhi from the land operations on the northern borders of Burma, and that it was less well-served with communications. To meet the first objection, I decided that the move should not take place until mid-April, 1944, to allow time for the build-up of General Giffard's

[1] In November, 1943, also, an officer of the Civil Affairs Service (Burma) was attached to the staff of our Assistant Military Attaché at Kunming, as a liaison with the Chinese Expeditionary Force.

[2] See 'A', paragraphs 19–22.

[3] See 'A', paragraph 70.

[4] Eastern Army, under the command of Lieut-General Irwin until 26th May 1943 and then under Lieut-General Giffard until 14th October 1943, split on 15th October 1943 into Eastern Command, India, under Lieut-General A.G.O.M. Mayne, and Fourteenth Army under Lieut-General Slim.

[5] My own Headquarters was called Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia (H.Q. SACSEA). Those of my Commanders-in-Chief were called H.Q. Eastern Fleet; H.Q. 11 Army Group; and H.Q. Air Command, South-East Asia (H.Q. ACSEA).

[6] Which, with the exception of a few strips of territory in the north of Burma, was at that time virtually the only unoccupied territory in the Command.

Headquarters, and for improvements to be made in the land-line telephone services and wireless network. There were also going to be daily air services, to enable staff officers to make the trip to Delhi or Calcutta in daylight, and letters to be delivered in 24 hours. As regards General Giffard's second point, it seemed to me that, as Army Group Commander-in-Chief, he was understandably thinking mainly in terms of the Burma front. In terms of theatre strategy, however—with the main emphasis on the forthcoming amphibious operations—the paramount consideration, I decided, was that my Headquarters should be near to the Naval Commander-in-Chief's Headquarters: which was the point from which these could best be controlled.

14. Three months later, when the temporary withdrawal of almost all our amphibious resources made it necessary to postpone combined operations, I was asked by both General Giffard and Air Chief Marshal Peirse to abandon or delay the move to Kandy, as they wished to remain in Delhi and in close contact with G.H.Q. (I.). Direct operational control of all the air forces operating in Burma was vested in Major-General (later Lieut.-General) George E. Stratemeyer; in the case of the land forces, direct operational control was vested in Lieut.-General Slim—moreover, it had been decided at the Cairo Conference that the U.S.-Chinese forces in Burma should be excluded from General Giffard's responsibilities.[1] It did not therefore seem to me vital that the Commanders-in-Chief should be in Delhi rather than in Ceylon—particularly as this dependence on India Command was the very thing I had feared might develop. I was therefore not prepared to cancel the orders for the move, preparations for which were, incidentally, reaching an advanced stage. The Army Group and Air Commanders-in-Chief were both, however, allowed to send a deputy with adequate staff to represent them at Kandy in the first instance, until they were able to move; in the same way as Rear-Admiral (later Vice-Admiral Sir) Geoffrey Miles had been representing C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet at Delhi.[2] At the same time I left a Rear Headquarters in Delhi, for contact with G.H.Q. (I.); and this strengthened the liaison with the Army Group and Air Headquarters until they also moved. When their move was impending, I decided to put my Deputy Principal Administrative Officer, Major-General C. R. C. (later Sir Charles) Lane, in charge of Rear H.Q., to represent me with H.E. the Viceroy[3] and H.E. the Commander-in-Chief in India, under the title of Supreme Allied Commander's Representative (S.A.C.R.).

15. On the 15th April, 1944, H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A., was transferred to Kandy, and the S.E.A.C. group of headquarters remained in Ceylon until the 25th November, 1945, when they closed down in Kandy and re-opened in Singapore. During this time the Commander-in-Chief, Ceylon, H.E. Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton[4] remained responsible, under me, for the defence and internal security of the island. In May, 1944, I was instructed by the Chiefs of Staff to forward a full appreciation of the situation which might develop if His Majesty's Government did not decide within the next few weeks to meet the request of Ceylon ministers for the appointment of a Commission to consider constitutional reforms. On the 21st May I called a meeting with H.E. the C.-in-C. and H.E. the Governor,[5] as a result of which I telegraphed the Chiefs of Staff supporting the view already expressed by Their Excellencies, that the life of the State Council could safely be prolonged (and a General Election, undesirable in war-time, postponed by an Order in Council) if, but only if, an announcement were made as soon as possible that a Commission would be appointed before the end of the year. I considered that if this were not done, a situation would probably develop which would impair the efficiency of the police, of other public services, and of labour for essential works—and that this would have an adverse effect on the war effort in South-East Asia. The Soulbury Commission was later appointed.

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BOUNDARY WITH THE CHINA THEATRE

It had been intended that the South-East Asia theatre should include Siam and French Indo-China. But since both these countries had been allotted to the China theatre on the dissolution of General Wavell's American-British-Dutch-Australian (A.B.D.A.) Command in 1942, it was decided, on the last day of the Quebec Conference, to split the difference, and to restore French Indo-China to the Generalissimo. At

[1] See 'A', paragraph 21.

[2] Air Chief Marshal Peirse sent Air Marshal (later Air Chief Marshal) Sir Guy Garrod as his deputy; and General Giffard sent Major-General I. S. O. Playfair as his. (Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese, Bt., who succeeded General Giffard later in the year, found that he needed another Major-General to head the staff that did not go to Kandy; and this appointment was at once made.)

[3] Field-Marshal The Viscount Wavell of Cyrenaica (later The Earl Wavell), who in June had been succeeded as C.-in-C. in India by General (later Field-Marshal) Sir Claude Auchinleck.

[4] Who was succeeded in January, 1945, by H.E. Lieut.-General (later Sir Edward de R.) Wetherall.

[5] Sir Andrew Caldecott.

the series of conferences held during my visit to Chungking, no mention had been made of theatre boundaries; but the Generalissimo had afterwards invited me to an informal discussion of our respective interests, with himself, Madame Chiang,[1] and Lieut.-General Somervell, whom the President had sent out with plenipotentiary powers, to discuss such questions with the Generalissimo.

17. It appeared that the Generalissimo and Lieut.-General Somervell had not yet been able to reach a compromise. The Generalissimo was insisting that both French Indo-China and Siam were known to be in his theatre; and that, if the decisions made at Quebec were implemented, the announcement that his theatre boundaries had been reduced would cause a loss of "face" which could not fail to have a grave, adverse effect on the morale of the Chinese troops and people. I suggested that the difficulty might be overcome by a "gentleman's agreement" between the Generalissimo and myself; by which no formal announcement would be made, and Siam and Indo-China would nominally remain within his theatre. Both of us would, however, have the right to operate in both countries; and any areas conquered from the Japanese would automatically become part of the Command that reconquered them. The question of boundaries, as such, would then only arise if the Chinese and South-East Asia forces approached one another, and seemed likely to make contact. The Generalissimo welcomed this solution.

18. Lieut.-General Somervell stayed in Chungking after my departure to draft a text, which the Generalissimo agreed. He then flew with the text to Delhi, where he showed it to me and to my Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff. I told him that I was entirely satisfied with the military paragraph, and that I agreed it; but that the political paragraph which the Generalissimo had now added would have to be looked into by my Political Advisers. Lieut.-General Somervell then flew to Washington, where he reported details of this agreement to the President and to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was also communicated to the Prime Minister and to the British Chiefs of Staff, through the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington.[2]

### THE CHINA-BURMA-INDIA THEATRE

19. All the U.S. forces, both land and air, in China, Burma and India were united in one Command. Although this Command was referred to as the "C.B.I. Theatre," it was not one of the recognised theatres, since it extended geographically across the boundaries of India Command, and of the South-East Asia and China theatres. The Commanding General, C.B.I., was Lieut.-General Stilwell. Not only had Lieut.-General Somervell persuaded the Generalissimo not to ask for his recall, but it was now proposed to add a further appointment to the four which he already held. The Generalissimo was insisting that I should exercise command of the Chinese forces in my theatre directly through Lieut.-General Stilwell; and as a consequence of this, the latter asked me if he might assume operational command of the north-eastern front in Burma, which he proposed to call the Northern Combat Area Command (N.C.A.C.). This last appointment, which he carried out with marked ability and forceful leadership, was in the future to occupy most of his attention, and to make his position even more complicated.

20. As Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Lieut.-General Stilwell's allegiance was to me; and in my absence from the theatre he was directly responsible, through the British Chiefs of Staff, to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. As Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander of the China theatre, his allegiance was to the Generalissimo. He therefore had to consider Chinese policy and interests, although these sometimes conflicted with the requirements of South-East Asia strategy—particularly since the Generalissimo and the armed forces of China were independent of the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Thirdly, as U.S. Commanding General, C.B.I., Lieut.-General Stilwell was responsible to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff: reporting to, and receiving administrative orders directly from, the War Department at Washington. As I had operational control of forces in South-East Asia, and the Generalissimo had operational control of forces in the China theatre, when opposite arguments were submitted about the employment of all resources in S.E.A.C. in order to aid China, Lieut.-General Stilwell had either to remain silent or oppose the policy of one or other of his superiors.[3]

21. Finally, as operational commander of a subordinate formation on the Burma front, Lieut.-General Stilwell was now again to be placed in a position of ambiguity. For at the conference recently held at Chungking, the Generalissimo, in placing the Chinese forces in S.E.A.C. under my overall command, had stipulated that they must be directly commanded by Lieut.-General Stilwell, under me. In order to

[1] Madame Chiang, who supervised the interpreting at the formal conferences, was invaluable in elucidating difficult points.

[2] See Appendix 'D'.

[3] See 'B', paragraphs 29–31

comply with these requirements, therefore, Lieut.-General Stilwell—who, as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, pointed out that General Giffard was subordinate to him—did not wish to come under the British Commander-in-Chief of 11 Army Group; which would have been the logical position if General Giffard had been "Allied" Commander-in-Chief.

22. I did not wish, however, to assume direct operational responsibility for one section of the front; and after considerable discussion a compromise was reached by which Lieut.-General Stilwell agreed to place himself and his N.C.A.C. forces under the operational control of Lieut.-General Slim (now commanding the Fourteenth Army) until they should reach Kamaing (Map 7–D.5.)—when they were to revert to my direct control.[1] In theory, therefore, Lieut.-General Slim, in overall control of the land campaign in Burma, owed allegiance to his own Army Group Commander-in-Chief, General Giffard, only in regard to the Fourteenth Army fronts and not in regard to N.C.A.C. But in practice, of course, General Giffard was consulted on the campaign as a whole; and the extraordinary arrangement which actually obtained was not publicised. This temporary solution was approved by the Prime Minister, the President, and the Generalissimo in November, 1943; but the Generalissimo made it clear, not only that the arrangement was temporary, but that it applied specifically and personally to Lieut.-General Slim.

### RELATIONS WITH INDIA COMMAND

23. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had urged, at Quebec, that since India was to continue to be the main base of supply and reinforcement for the South-East Asia theatre, and since reserve formations for S.E.A.C. were to be held and trained in India, India Command should be placed under me. The British, however, held that it was constitutionally impracticable to place the troops in India under a Commander who was not responsible to the Government of India. They further considered that the functions of Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, and Commander-in-Chief in India (the latter being also Defence Member of the Government of India) were more than one man could effectively discharge. It was therefore decided that the command in India should be divided from the operational command in South-East Asia, and that the two Commands should be equal and independent.

24. The administration of India as a base for the forces in South-East Asia was to remain under the control of the Commander-in-Chief in India. It was considered that the co-ordination of movement and maintenance, both of the operational forces based on India and of the internal garrison, could best be carried out efficiently by one staff responsible in the last resort to one authority, with power to decide priorities. This machinery already existed in the Government of India and in G.H.Q. (I.), and the Chiefs of Staff considered that it was the only machinery which could carry out the dual tasks of meeting the internal requirements of India, as well as those of operations in the South-East Asia theatre.

25. As soon as my Headquarters was fully established, therefore, the Commander-in-Chief in India relinquished responsibility for operations in my theatre. But since it was impossible for 11 Army Group to take over full administrative responsibility on its inception, G.H.Q. (I.) remained answerable for the majority of administrative questions until 1st May, 1944. General Auchinleck throughout retained under his command all Indian base and training organisations, as well as all Army formations in India and certain Indian Air Force squadrons. Troop movements, also, were to be carried out for me by G.H.Q. (I.); as well as movements of stores from India to S.E.A.C. After the Quebec Conference, the British Chiefs of Staff had directed General Auchinleck to prepare India as a base for twenty divisions (and as a transit base for five more); for one hundred and fifty-four R.A.F. squadrons and thirty shore-based Fleet Air Arm squadrons; for certain naval forces, and American and Chinese troops; as well as for providing base hospitals and various other facilities.

26. This great undertaking entailed large-scale organisation and a vast programme of construction.[2] For G.H.Q. (I). not only had to procure, receive, hold, and finally supply all the forces in South-East Asia; as well as acclimatise, train and where necessary equip, all forces in transit to S.E.A.C.; but was also called on to accept, hold, equip and re-train formations temporarily withdrawn from operations. Moreover, although the R.A.F. base came under the direct command of the Air C.-in-C. South-East Asia, the airfields themselves were in India; and, together with the housing and storage which they entailed, these formed by far the biggest single item in the programme. In theory, such a complex dove-tailing of our respect-

[1] See 'B', paragraph 173.

[2] In South-East Asia, mainly owing to the less developed state of the countries, far more men were needed to keep a division in the field than in Europe. Whereas in Normandy the number was about 40,000, in South-East Asia it approached 56,000—or 70,000 including civil labour (which in 1944 reached a total of nearly 400,000, including civil contractors and labour employed by the U.S. forces in the Command).

ive responsibilities might well have turned out to be an unworkable proposition; but in practice, it worked better than either of us had dared to hope, and the division of responsibilities took an immense load off my shoulders.

### RELATIONS WITH THE VICEROY

27. My relations with the Viceroy, Field-Marshal Lord Wavell, were defined in a directive issued to him by His Majesty's Government, of which I was given a copy. According to the terms of this, the Viceroy was authorised to take, on behalf of His Majesty's Government and the Ministers in the United Kingdom directly concerned, such measures, and to issue on their behalf such instructions, as he might consider necessary to secure harmonious co-operation between South-East Asia Command, the United Kingdom agencies concerned, and the relative Indian authorities. The Viceroy was directed to take the necessary decisions without previous reference to the appropriate Ministers in the United Kingdom only when they were required immediately. To assist him in the discharge of these additional responsibilities, an official with the title of "Adviser to the Viceroy on War Administration" was appointed; and Sir Archibald Rowlands, who was chosen for this post, also acted as my Financial Adviser from November, 1943, to October, 1944.

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### FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF

As Supreme Allied Commander, I was directly responsible to the British Chiefs of Staff, through whom I received all strategical and operational proposals and requirements. They, in their turn, referred to the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Washington for decisions at the highest level. Although I had no authority for addressing the Combined Chiefs of Staff or U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff direct, I was allowed to repeat to the British Joint Staff Mission (J.S.M.) in Washington those of my telegrams to the British Chiefs of Staff which would require consideration in Washington. I was empowered to issue directives and instructions to my own Commanders-in-Chief, except in certain matters which they referred directly to their respective Ministries. My directive specifically placed all three service Commanders-in-Chief under me, but in the case of the Naval Commander-in-Chief it contained certain reservations.

#### (i) NAVAL FORCES

29. The area of responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet, not only covered the waters of South-East Asia; but also included Aden (from 28th December, 1943), the Persian Gulf, and the east coast of Africa (as far south as Quelimane and including Madagascar), all of which lay to the west of my boundaries. In all matters concerning the security and support of the land campaigns and amphibious operations in South-East Asia, Admiral Sir James Somerville, C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet, was subordinate to me. But in all matters connected with the security of sea communications in the Indian Ocean, both outside and inside the area of S.E.A.C., and with offensive action against the enemy's naval forces, he was directly responsible to the Admiralty.

30. I had discussed this unsatisfactory duality with the First Sea Lord[1] at Quebec, before accepting the post. While agreeing that from the Supreme Allied Commander's point of view this was an anomaly—but one which he stressed had to be accepted in South-East Asia Command as in every other theatre—he had urged me to accept, and had assured me of his strong personal support. The arrangement was very confusing at first; for it was difficult to be certain when naval forces, British or Allied, were under my control, and when they were under the control of the Admiralty through Admiral Somerville. In theory, the system was never altered; but in practice matters improved beyond recognition in August, 1944. A generous interpretation of my position by Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser (later Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fraser of North Cape) who then succeeded as C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet—and, when he went to the Pacific, by Admiral Sir Arthur Power—enabled co-ordination with the other services to be achieved in every department where this was necessary.

#### (ii) LAND FORCES

31. The Prime Minister had wished me to follow the system for command of the land forces which had been in force under Generals Wavell and Auchinleck in India, when India Command had exercised operational control in South-East Asia; and to deal directly with the various, separate Army formations. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff,[2] however, had taken the view that I should be allowed an Army Group Commander-in-Chief, to deal with all the British land forces on my behalf: which would give me

[1] The late Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, who died in October, 1943.

[2] General Sir Alan Brooke (later Field-Marshal The Viscount Alanbrooke).

three Commanders-in-Chief, one for each service. I had strongly supported this view; and the Prime Minister had authorised the formation of 11 Army Group, of which General Giffard was appointed Commander-in-Chief. Eastern Army was superseded by two new commands: Fourteenth Army and Eastern Command. The former was placed under the command of Lieut.-General Slim, in S.E.A.C., while Lieut.-General A. F. P. (later Sir Philip) Christison succeeded him as commander of 15 Corps. Eastern Command, which contained some of the most important base depots for S.E.A.C., remained under the overall command of General Auchinleck.

32. General Giffard was not "Allied"; and his command was confined to the British Commonwealth land forces. In addition to his operational functions in S.E.A.C., he was responsible for the general policy governing the organisation, equipment and training of all forces within the boundaries of India Command who were assigned to S.E.A.C. but had not yet been allotted to his command; but they were actually trained and administered by General Auchinleck so long as they remained in the latter's area of command.

(iii) AIR FORCES

33. When I took over operational command from the C.-in-C. in India, on the 16th November, Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, who had previously been under General Auchinleck, was transferred to my command as my Air Commander-in-Chief, bringing with him all British Empire air forces (and one Netherlands squadron) throughout India, Ceylon, and Burma—with the exception of a few Indian Air Force Squadrons, which were placed under the Air Officer Commanding, India, who was responsible to General Auchinleck for the defence of the North-West Frontier. Although he did not command any U.S. air forces, Air Chief Marshal Peirse had a few American liaison officers on his staff.

34. The Air C.-in-C. was responsible for the development of India as a base for future air operations, as a supply centre, and as a training ground for Air Force personnel; he also commanded all flying-boats, general reconnaissance land planes and coastal striking force aircraft. Strategic control of flying-boats and general reconnaissance aircraft operating over the sea, however, was vested in the C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet. In these matters, authority was exercised through the Air Officer Commanding 222 Group, R.A.F., whose Headquarters was at Colombo. This officer was responsible not only for the control of his own group within my boundaries, but also for directing operations over the whole sea area. He also had to keep in close touch with the Navy, and the South African air authorities, as well as the various Commands which the area contained; and for this purpose, a separate body, known as Indian Ocean General Reconnaissance Operations (IOGROPS) was formed, with a Deputy Air Officer Commanding, and a separate staff. This came into operation on the 1st May, 1944.

35. So that the best use should be made of the few aircraft available for patrols, a policy was introduced which aimed at making General Reconnaissance forces as mobile as possible, and enabling them to concentrate where submarines were known, or suspected, to be. Where no threat existed, air escort to convoys was reduced to a minimum; and the aircraft saved became available for concerted action if any emergency arose in the more dangerous areas. To assemble aircraft in a threatened area, it was necessary to shuttle them from base to base, routed over shipping lanes, so that they could carry out patrols while in transit. In order to effect a still greater economy in aircraft resources, IOGROPS was instructed to devise a modified form of the Atlantic system (STIPPLE)—by which air cover was allotted according to the degree of risk to the convoy, and to its value—which would be suitable to the Command, as well as acceptable to the naval authorities. Meanwhile, so that there should be closer liaison between Air Command and the Navy, operations in the Indian Ocean were gradually brought under the control of five Naval Air Operations Rooms: at Bombay, Vizagapatam, Kilindini, Aden, and Colombo.

(iv) U.S. FORCES

36. On the few occasions when U.S. naval forces were in S.E.A.C., they came under the operational control of the C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet, in the same way as the Netherlands (and later, French) naval forces in the theatre. When defending sea communications, therefore, or when engaged in operations against the enemy fleet, they came under the British Admiralty; but when attacking shore targets, or supporting the Army in any way, they came under my orders. The C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet was consequently my only "Allied" C.-in-C., but his staff was British except for a few U.S. liaison officers.

37. Unlike the British Commonwealth land and air forces, which were directly under my operational control, the U.S. land and air forces were under me only through the U.S. Commanding General. In the case of the land forces this was not a serious matter, since the U.S. component consisted mainly of administrative and technical troops. Although these exceeded 270,000 by the end of the war, the U.S. land forces actually fighting in Burma at no time exceeded one brigade—consisting of two regiments, each of the

strength of one British brigade.[1] The case of the air forces, however, was quite a different matter. When I took over, almost one-third of the combat aircraft were American; and in the following year, when these numbers were being greatly increased, U.S. transport aircraft predominated. Though the overall number of British Commonwealth squadrons was to continue to exceed that of U.S. squadrons in the theatre, by far the majority of transport aircraft were American; and by the end of the war the U.S. operational air forces in the theatre had a total personnel of 61,000.

38. British and American aircraft were functioning in an undivided common element; and there was no logical reason why their operations should not have been fully co-ordinated from the beginning. But when I took over command, the same clear-cut division of command which applied to the land forces was operating in the air as well; and the U.S. Air Commanding General, Major-General George E. Stratemeyer, took his orders from me through Lieut.-General Stilwell and not through Air Chief Marshal Peirse. The position was, therefore, that a subordinate air commander in my theatre was responsible to me for his air operations through a senior officer other than my Air Commander-in-Chief. I considered this situation was certain to entail an over-lapping of effort—or, worse, gaps in our air defence; that it would lead to a lack of co-ordination, and an impairment of general efficiency; and that any of these might, at a time of crisis, have very serious consequences. Since it was clear that the only workable solution was to integrate the two air forces, I did this on the 14th December.

### HEADQUARTERS STAFF ORGANISATION

39. H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A., was organised in accordance with the instructions laid down by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at Quebec, that my Headquarters staff should be a combined British and American one; and with the directions of the British Chiefs of Staff, that all three services should be represented in every important division of the Headquarters organisation.[2] All staff officers were responsible to the Chief of Staff, Lieut.-General Pownall, under whom were three officers of equal status:—

(*a*) a Deputy Chief of Staff—Major-General Wedemeyer, U.S. Army—responsible for plans, operations, Intelligence, communications, etc.;

(*b*) a Principal Administrative Officer—Lieut.-General Raymond A. Wheeler, U.S. Army—responsible for the co-ordination of administration and logistics, and for co-ordination with the Principal Administrative Officer of India Command; and

(*c*) a Deputy Chief of Staff (Information and Civil Affairs)—Air Marshal Joubert de la Ferté—responsible for Civil Affairs (including Netherlands and French sections), Psychological Warfare,[3] Information and Public Relations,[4] and Service Relations (including broadcasting and newspapers for our own forces).

Under the Chief of Staff was an Assistant Chief of Staff—Major-General G. E. Wildman-Lushington, Royal Marines; and under the Deputy Chief of Staff were two Assistant Deputy Chiefs of Staff—Air Vice-Marshal J. Whitworth-Jones, and Commodore G. M. B. Langley.[5]

40. It had been laid down at Quebec that there was to be a Principal Administrative Officer; and General Marshall had offered me the services of Major-General Wheeler (who at that time commanded the U.S. Services of Supply in the China-Burma-India theatre). On the same day, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff had offered me Lieut.-General Sir Wilfred Lindsell, for the same post. I had gratefully accepted General Marshall's offer; at the same time requesting the C.I.G.S. to offer Lieut.-General Lindsell to the Commander-in-Chief in India, which, although it was to be the administrative base for the new command, had as yet no P.A.O. This offer, I am glad to say, was accepted. Later, on my return to London, taking advantage of the visit of Brigadier-General W. Donovan, the Head of the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), to London in September, 1943, I had held a meeting with him and with the heads of the corresponding British Intelligence Services. They agreed to my setting up a staff Division[6] to co-ordinate the plans and operations of all Allied Intelligence forces operating in enemy occupied territories of South-East Asia.

### ORGANISATION FOR PLANNING

41. The Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff were instructed to set up an inter-service, inter-Allied planning staff (later known as the War Staff) whose duty would be the preparation of long-term appreciations and outline plans, and of directives to the Commanders-in-Chief for approved operations. The three Commanders-in-Chief had planning staffs,

[1] Moreover, until 1945, Northern Combat Area Command was to have no direct lateral contact with its adjacent front. (See 'A', paragraph 73, Map 19 (facing page 73) and Annexure 10.).

[2] See Annexure 1.

[3] See Annexure 7.

[4] See Annexure 8.

[5] The names and appointments of all senior officers and staff officers are given in Annexure 9.

[6] 'P' Division, with a British Head and a U.S. Deputy.

whose duty it was to prepare short-term executive plans for operations already approved. Admiral Somerville and Air Chief Marshal Peirse already had their own; General Giffard, in forming his, took over General Auchinleck's complete Army planning staff, by which he benefited from the planning already carried out by General Auchinleck during the five previous months. Since the Naval planners were at the Fleet Headquarters in Colombo, however, a separate planning staff, especially for amphibious operations in support of the Army, was formed in Delhi under Rear-Admiral Miles, who represented the Naval Commander-in-Chief there; and Admiral Somerville came up with his own naval planning staff every few weeks. There were thus the War Staff and the Commanders-in-Chief's planners. They kept in close touch at every stage of planning; but under the conditions of the Burma campaign of 1944, and particularly with a lack of firm directives from the Chiefs of Staff for future strategical operations, it became increasingly difficult to draw a line between long-term and short-term plans; and this aggravated a tendency to overlap which already existed.

42. Any difference of views of the Commanders-in-Chief (as represented by their planners) and of the War Staff was rarely resolved before a meeting was held on the highest level. Moreover, since the Army Group and Air Commanders-in-Chief commanded no U.S. forces, and the Naval Commander-in-Chief (although he did command U.S. naval units) had no American naval planners, it was only on the War Staff that American planners from all three services were represented. The Commanders-in-Chief were, of course, my principal advisers, so far as their own service was concerned; but the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, or his representative, was responsible for ensuring that the American point of view was adequately represented at the frequent high-level meetings with the Commanders-in-Chief, which were called "Supreme Allied Commander's meetings", since it was the Supreme Allied Commander alone who made decisions after hearing all points of view.

43. An efficient planning organisation is one of the first requirements for exercising efficient command on a high level; and I felt that if I was to fulfil my duties as Supreme Allied Commander (as opposed to being Chairman of a Committee), it was essential that some organisation should be evolved which would allow me to inject my own ideas at every stage into all plans, including executive plans, before any degree of finality had been reached. But the Commanders-in-Chief, who were going to be responsible for carrying out the actual operations, were opposed to the creation of a Supreme War Staff, which would prepare the long-term outline plans, but with which they would have no connection; and it was not until August, 1944, when I was informed by the Chiefs of Staff of their intention to allow me to substitute for the C.-in-C. 11 Army Group a C.-in-C. Allied Land Forces, that I was able to re-organise this system[1].

[1] See 'B', paragraphs 235–237.

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LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND SUPPLY BASES

The problem of lines of communication through Assam,[2] for the effective support of the coming operations in Burma, had been discussed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Quebec Conference; and I had given instructions, in London, that detailed preliminary examinations should be made. It had always been supposed that any attempt at the invasion of India could only be made by way of the North-West Frontier: in consequence, excellent strategic communications had been built to support army forces fighting on that frontier. On the north-east frontier, however, no such communications existed; since it had been held that the disease-ridden jungle-covered mountain ranges formed an impenetrable barrier, and that an offensive campaign across them was a military impossibility. Even if an enemy succeeded in penetrating on foot with mule transport, it was thought, he could not hope to maintain himself—and indeed it was this fact which really arrested the Japanese advance on the boundaries of India in 1942—but by the same token the opinion was widely held that a successful Allied offensive overland would also be almost impossible.

45. The principal means of overland supply of the forces in Burma (and ultimately in China) was a complicated system of port, railway, road, river and pipe-line transport—later to be known as the Assam Lines of Communication. The most important of these was the Bengal-Assam Railway, which before the war, owing to very poor operating standards and a lack of station and terminal facilities, had had the very limited capacity (when considered as a through L. of C.) of some 600 tons per day. The development of the railway had been taken in hand; but owing to a series of setbacks during the monsoon of 1942, progress had not at first come up to expectations: indeed by May, 1943, the capacity of the entire lines of communications (excluding pipe-lines) for operational

[2] See Map 2 (before page 1).

military stores had only been brought to some 1,500–2,000 tons per day. By October, 1943, however, considerable improvements had been effected, and the capacity of the L. of C. (excluding pipe-lines) was now estimated at 3,200 tons per day[1]—towards the target set at the Quebec Conference of 3,400 tons by November, 1943, 4,400 tons by October, 1944, and 7,300 tons by the 1st January, 1946. The Government of India was working out schemes for further improvement, which represented a considerable advance on what so far had been achieved, but still fell far short of the Quebec estimates; and their programme provided for retaining the existing civilian staffs on all sectors of the railway.

46. Since July, 1943, however, the question of putting the railway (or parts of it) under military control had been under discussion between General Auchinleck and the Chiefs of Staff. I was strongly in favour of doing this; but no British railway troops were available. On the 23rd October, a special meeting attended by General Auchinleck, representatives of the Government of India, and Lieut.-General Somervell, was held to discuss the whole matter. Lieut.-General Somervell claimed that a 50% increase could be achieved by the 1st April, 1944, if certain operating changes were introduced; and in order to guarantee this increase he offered to send American railway troops to India to work on vital sectors of the railway. The Government of India representatives said that although they could not guarantee such an increase under the existing system of civilian control, they were strongly opposed in principle to any form of militarisation—while in practice they feared that the introduction of U.S. troops could not fail to cause dislocation during the vital period in which the latter would be taking over.

47. But I was determined to stand firm on this issue, since the success of my offensive plans depended on it; and with the support of General Auchinleck the proposal was finally agreed to on the 6th November. American railway experts were at once flown from Persia to survey the line, the most important sectors of which were eventually taken over by some 4,200 American railway engineers on the 1st March, 1944. The immediate increase in deliveries to Assam over the railway was not as great as Lieut.-General Somervell had hoped, but during the latter part of 1944 and the early part of 1945 the lift rose very rapidly;[2] and the introduction of military control was unquestionably justified by the results obtained.

48. The problem presented by the inadequacy of existing communications in Northern Burma was aggravated by the fact that, although our operations were essentially part of one strategic pattern, they were geographically remote from each other and had to be conducted on fronts separated from one another by vast natural obstacles. In 1942, our strategy had been a defensive one, and our advanced bases had been sited accordingly; and this meant that each front had to be served by a separate line of communication. In addition to undertaking new construction, it would be necessary to make the maximum use of the existing facilities. But the speed at which these advanced bases could be developed depended on the capacity of the lines of communication: which had to meet not only the requirements for the construction of the advanced bases themselves but also the rival claims of normal maintenance, operations, the air route to China, road and airfield construction, and the development of lines of communication themselves. Moreover, since all these commitments required large engineer resources as well as trucks and administrative stores—all of which were in very short supply—the administrative problems of the campaign were enormous.

49. The natural advanced base for the Arakan front was Chittagong:[3] which was quite unsuitable for supporting a large-scale offensive. In 1942, during the retreat, its port had been prepared for demolition, and many "scorched-earth" measures had in fact been carried out before the decision not to complete its destruction. The town had been frequently bombed by the Japanese between December, 1942, and May, 1943, but this had done little damage to the port facilities. Development of the port and base was now being held up, however; since constructional work had to be undertaken while operations were actually in progress, and there were therefore constant and conflicting claims for the limited engineer resources and stores available. Moreover, the capacity of the port was still not up to requirements, and operational demands not only limited the tonnages of engineer stores which could be imported but also retarded the stocking of the base.[4]

50. In Assam, as in Arakan, we were faced with considerable difficulties. At Dimapur (Manipur Road), which was the advanced base for the Central front,[5] work on a completely new base had had to be undertaken in a highly malarial area. In addition to the operational troops, there was a labour force of about

[1] The average daily tonnage lifted was 2,800 in October and 3,070 in November.

[2] The average daily tonnage rising to 3,740 in April; 4,690 in June; 6,290 in September; and 8,630 in March, 1945.

[3] See Map 3 (before page 1).

[4] Nevertheless, the import capacity of Chittagong was increased from 1,230 tons per day in November, 1943, to 2,560 tons per day in May, 1944.

[5] The advanced base for the N.C.A.C. front was at Ledo, but the two fronts had to share communications to some extent.

60,000 employed on the construction of roads, airfields and other works. This line of communication had also to carry to the railheads at Ledo and Chabua the increasingly heavy demands of Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces, and of the units of U.S. Air Transport Command, which ran the air ferry route over "the Hump" to China. On the 6th November, the Government of India agreed to my proposals that vital sectors of the railway should be put under military control; but it was not until the 1st March that the American railway troops took over, and in the meantime we had to carry on with the existing arrangements.

51. It had been decided at the Quebec Conference that U.S. forces in S.E.A.C. should construct a 6-inch pipe-line from Budge-Budge (near Calcutta) to Tinsukia in Northern Assam; and a 4-inch pipe-line from Tinsukia across Burma and into China. It was hoped that the first of these would not only facilitate air operations into China, but would also relieve the great strain which the movement of petrol (gasoline) was placing on the rail and road system. The projected alignment of this pipe-line was now being reconnoitred, and sites were being chosen for the tank farms. Construction was started in January, 1944; and at about the same time, British engineers started to construct a 4-inch pipe-line from Chittagong, through Dimapur and Imphal, to Tamu.[1] (At Quebec, the U.S. authorities had further agreed to supplement existing water transport on the Brahmaputra, by providing a fleet of tugs and barges, with crews and operators. Preparations were being made to put this scheme into effect.[2])

52. On the 21st January, general congestion on the Assam railway made it necessary to reduce military traffic to one petrol and one stores train per day; and it was not until the 9th February that normal running could be resumed. These restrictions had serious repercussions on the military programme. In January the shortfall was considerable; and since the slight improvement in tonnages which was achieved during February and March coincided with greater demands from the operational areas, it was not possible to make up the backlog. The petrol situation became easier at the end of February, when the Chandranathpur-Dimapur sector of the 4-inch pipe-line came into operation and took a considerable burden off the railway. Our anxieties were increased at this time by the knowledge that in almost every previous year the stretch of railway between the Brahmaputra and the mountains of Bhutan had suffered severe washouts during the late spring. Energetic measures were taken to minimise the dislocation which such a disaster would cause, but to our relief we were spared this additional complication. Nevertheless, the general supply situation was very serious for many months; and it was only owing to the unstinted efforts of all concerned with the direction and operation of these lines of communication as a whole, that a breakdown never occurred.

#### EXPERIMENTS IN LONG-RANGE AIR SUPPLY

53. The axis of Burma runs from the sea in the south to the Himalayas in the north;[3] the great river Irrawaddy and its tributaries run throughout the length of this axis; and the railway lines, and the principal roads, run from south to north: so the obvious way to invade the country would be from the south—and this the Japanese had already done. Unless and until we could secure the port of Rangoon and fight our way north up the axis, it was going to be necessary to build roads across the mountain ranges, some of them rising at their peaks to nearly 10,000 feet, which run in a crescent following the general outlines of the national boundary in the north. These are covered with jungle so dense that in some parts—such as the "creeper country" in the Hukawng Valley—a patrol would take 24 hours, even without enemy opposition, to hack its way for a couple of miles.

54. Brigadier Wingate had told me, in our discussions in London, that he intended to use the same technique as before: marching his troops in with mules, and supplying them by air. Although this air supply would be mainly by parachute, he was proposing to construct landing-strips, to take Dakotas (C-47) in the jungle glades round Rail Indaw,[4] which he reconnoitred in 1943. It had already been clear to me, however, that the practicability of large-scale air supply would have to be seriously investigated—not only for the Long-Range Penetration Brigades, but for the land forces in general—and I had instructed him to begin experiments at once with Colonel Cochrane, in loading mules and all forms of equipment (including 25-pounders) into transport aircraft and gliders. At the same time, I requested the Government of India to give me five per cent. of their total cloth production for supply-dropping parachutes, which they generously agreed to do; I also asked for four hundred power sewing-machines to be flown out from England.

[1] See Map 4 (before page 1).
[2] Unfortunately, the only tugs available proved to be of too deep a draught for the Brahmaputra; and the project had to be abandoned.
[3] See Map 5 (before page 1).
[4] See Map 7 (facing page 1). Since there are two Indaws in Burma, one was referred to as Rail Indaw (Map 7–E.5), and the other as Oil Indaw (F.3).

55. By February, preliminary trials in air-supply had been so successful that I was able to instruct Major-General Wedemeyer to ask General Arnold, when he saw him in Washington[1] if he would set up special formations: and this resulted in the creation of the Combat Cargo Groups. As it turned out, air-supply was to be used in Burma on a greater scale than in any previous campaign.[2] For soon after I took over the operational command, the amphibious fleet which had been collected in South-East Asia (and with which it was intended to seize an advanced base in the Andamans, for an assault on Rangoon or some other suitable objective) was recalled for operations in the European theatre. This meant that we would after all be faced with having to reconquer the country entirely by land: "against the grain," for mountains would intervene between any seaports we might capture and the axis of the army's advance.

56. It was going to require great effort to build and maintain roads over mountains and through jungles, under monsoon conditions; and in the early stages our roads would run more or less parallel to the front line, and could be—indeed, were—cut, and the forward troops isolated. In countries where forces are advancing at right-angles to the front (so that the question of protecting lines of communication hardly arises); where there are railways and good, metalled roads; and where pipe-lines can easily be laid, air-supply may not be as economical a factor as in South-East Asia. But in Burma it was only by relying very largely on air-supply,[3] that we were able to concentrate our limited engineer resources on airfield construction and maintenance; that we were able to limit the number of troops required for protection duties (mainly on airfields); and that we were able to keep the greatest possible proportion of troops in the front line.

### EFFECTS OF THE MONSOON ON OPERATIONS

57. The difficulties of terrain were greatly increased by the south-west monsoon.[4] From May to October the sea and swell created by the south-west winds prevent landing operations on exposed beaches except in the area of the Kra Isthmus, which links Malaya with Siam. The rains impose great hardship and strain on the fighting forces: during the wet months they remain almost permanently soaked to the skin, their few possessions mildewed and damp. As soon as the rains start, unmetalled roads are either washed away or are turned into sticky mud often a foot deep, along which vehicles slither as best they can; even metalled roads are apt to be blocked or cut by landslides. Road metal, moreover, is only obtainable in the hills and foothills and often has to be hauled 20 and 30 miles.

58. Apart from the limitations imposed by water-logged airfields, air operations are generally affected by dangerous cumulo-nimbus clouds, usually several miles thick, which often start at 300 feet and go up in an unbroken mass to 12,000 or 16,000 feet; sometimes to 30,000 feet and more. It is almost impossible to fly safely through these clouds; it is seldom possible to fly over them; and in mountainous country it is very dangerous to fly under them. By day the pilot can try to fly around them—but our aircraft, which were usually working at extreme range, could not afford the petrol for making long diversions; and pilots who ventured on the fringe of these clouds were forced to turn back.

59. On going into the matter in London, I had found that in South-East Asia, custom and military opinion regarded the south-west monsoon as a close season. No operations had yet been undertaken in this period; since the Allied (and evidently the Japanese) commanders considered that the drain on resources would place the side which attempted them at a grave disadvantage when the dry season returned. But as it was obvious that, if we fought for only six or seven months in the year, our campaign in Burma would take twice as long, I determined that we must fight on as hard in the monsoon as in the dry weather; and gain the advantage which comes to the side that perseveres when the other is expecting that both sides will stop. Preliminary enquiries had therefore been made in London, as to the chances of providing air and water transport and other facilities (such as additional radio aids for aircraft); and I had instructed the Medical Advisory Division to investigate specific methods of protecting men under monsoon conditions.

### INCIDENCE OF TROPICAL DISEASES

60. The jungles of Burma are infested with malarial mosquitoes, scrub-typhus mites, and the bacteria and amoebae of dysentery. Between them these presented as redoubtable an enemy as the Japanese Army itself; for the breakdown of morale in the earlier campaign had been aggravated by the fear of succumbing to these diseases, passing through overcrowded and often inadequate medical centres, and finally returning to the fighting areas in a physically weakened state. The Medical Advisory Division was now investigating

[1] See 'B', paragraph 31.
[2] 615,000 tons were to be lifted by air to the armies in Burma in the course of the campaign—including 315,000 reinforcements flown in and 210,000 casualties flown out.
[3] At one time, 95 per cent. of all requirements of the front-line troops of the Fourteenth Army were to be supplied by air.
[4] See Annexure 3.

ways and means of improving health services in the theatre;[1] and steps were already being taken by the commanders for the firm enforcement of medical discipline, particularly anti-malaria precautions.[2] But it was essential that the grave shortage of medical personnel and nurses should be remedied; and, above all, that Allied research into preventive measures should be extended, so that expert knowledge should provide us with superior protection to that which the enemy would have at his disposal. For I was determined to harness disease, so far as possible, as an additional weapon against the enemy; and the Medical Advisory Division was therefore also engaged in discovering which were the most unhealthy areas in South-East Asia, and which were the most unhealthy times of the year to undertake operations—so that we could engage the Japanese in those places and at those times in which our superior medical methods would give us the greatest advantage.[3]

### STATE OF MORALE

61. For two years our forces in South-East Asia, having been beaten back, had failed to make any significant recovery—at sea, on land, or in the air. A possible invasion of India had been averted by General The Hon. Sir Harold Alexander (later Field-Marshal The Viscount Alexander of Tunis)[4] who had succeeded in bringing our forces in Burma more or less intact to the Indian frontier just as the monsoon started in 1942—thereby gaining three months, and a further five months of monsoon, in which the defences of India could be prepared. The first Burma campaign had therefore been a military defeat, but not a major disaster; but the spirits of the men had suffered, and when, early in 1943, the first Allied attempt to regain the offensive had met with serious defeat in Arakan, morale had reached its lowest ebb. Confidence had been severely shaken; and lines of communication, reinforcement camps, and administrative services of the Eastern Army—particularly in Arakan—had been largely disorganised.

62. At this point, General Giffard had taken over the Eastern Army, under General Auchinleck: together they had arrested further deterioration and started rebuilding the fighting and administrative machine. General Giffard had instituted hard, intensive training throughout the monsoon, appointing new commanders to formations and units where this proved necessary; and with sound administrative measures he had greatly improved the lines of communication, which were still woefully inadequate in spite of great efforts made in difficult circumstances in the past for their improvement. It was on this foundation that Lieut.-General Slim was now setting out to build a new morale. The fact remained, however, that British forces had not yet inflicted any noteworthy defeat on the Japanese; though Brigadier Wingate's operations had made it abundantly clear that our troops, when properly trained in the technique of jungle warfare, were superior to those of the enemy. The first thing to do was to persuade our forces of this fact; and to break the myth of the "Invincible Jap" which had been so assiduously spread by the Japanese propaganda machine—as well as by misinformed opinion in the world in general.

63. In the months following my arrival, I paid frequent visits to the fighting forces of all nationalities, addressing many tens of thousands, and speaking personally to the officers of the majority of the units and formations of the Fourteenth Army, the Third Tactical Air Force, and Naval Coastal Forces. I told them that I was convinced of the superiority of our forces—man for man, and unit for unit—over the Japanese. I said that there would be no more retreating, since any units cut off by Japanese infiltration would, in future, be supplied by air; and that it was my intention to fight for, and maintain, the high degree of air superiority necessary for the successful and uninterrupted operation of air-supply. I told them we would fight on and fly on throughout the monsoon, giving the enemy no respite; and that we would exploit our superior medical skill in order to engage him in the unhealthiest places.

64. In the last analysis, of course, the recovery of the fighting spirit of the troops must depend on the troops themselves, and on their achievement of small successes in patrol activities, followed by success in battle. In October and early November many patrol actions were carried out, in the great majority of which we proved superior to the Japanese; and later, in November (by which time they were under the operational command of South-East Asia) small units, ably led and well-trained, were already able, under the improved weather conditions, to conduct successful minor operations against Japanese forward troops. Morale depends, however, not only on doing well

[1] See Annexure 5.
[2] In 1943, for every man hospitalised with wounds, 120 had been sickness casualties; in 1944, the 120 were reduced to 20 (though hospital admissions still averaged more than 10,000 a month); in the first six months of 1945, the proportion was down to 10, and finally to 6 at the end of the war. The annual malaria rate, which in 1943 was 84 per cent. of the total army strength, dropped to 13 per cent. by 1945 (See Annexure 5).
[3] See Map 6 (before page 1).
[4] G.O.C., Burma, 5th March to 20th May, 1942.

against the enemy, but on feeling that what one is doing is known and appreciated; and I considered it imperative that the widespread impression should be destroyed, that South-East Asia was the "Forgotten Front."

65. Before leaving London, I had done my best to arrange that adequate publicity should be given to the Command in the Press at Home, for this would react on the troops by way of their families. The Prime Minister had obtained from Lord Rothermere the loan for six months of the services of Mr. Charles Eade[1] as my Press Adviser—so that adequate publicity might be given to the forces in South-East Asia in the Press at Home. Mr. Eade was able to arrange with All-India Radio for a daily Forces Programme to be broadcast to the troops. I had also obtained from the War Office, while still in London, the services of Second-Lieutenant (later Lieut.-Colonel) Frank Owen,[2] whom I had instructed to organise in Calcutta the production of an inter-service daily newspaper, "SEAC," for distribution to the forward areas, to keep the men in touch with news from Home. So that they should think of "SEAC" as being their own paper, and not as being imposed on them, the forces were to be encouraged to send in criticisms and suggestions; and to use its correspondence columns as a forum for the free expression of opinion. Since in civilian life they had presumably been among the readers of a great variety of papers, I laid down that "SEAC" must embody as many features, and of as great a variety, as the lay-out permitted.[3]

66. During the winter, great improvement in morale became evident. Hopes rose with the formation of the new Command, which in itself was taken as a sign that a large-scale offensive would now have support at the highest level; and great expectations of new resources and fresh reinforcements combined with successful patrol actions in producing a complete swing-over. In my visit to the troops, however, I pointed out that our plans would always be affected by the strategic situation in Europe and the Pacific; and I did not disguise from them that we would not be able to claim priority over other theatres, and could expect few reinforcements until Germany had been defeated. I can pay no higher tribute to the officers and men of the Command, than to say that they were able to carry through a campaign which had until then been considered one of almost insuperable difficulty in the circumstances then existing. For as it turned out, they were finally required to invade Burma "against the grain" in the face of the monsoon and the ravages of malaria, and to fight over country which had previously only been crossed by the most intrepid explorers. If they had not recovered their spirit, and been imbued with the highest morale, a campaign of this nature could not have been attempted.

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### DISPOSITION OF NAVAL FORCES

In September, 1943, the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet, had moved his Headquarters from the fleet base at Kilindini in East Africa, to Colombo, in anticipation of the time when offensive action would become possible in the Bay of Bengal. But until the end of January, 1944, the strength of the Eastern Fleet in South-East Asia was to consist almost entirely of the 4th Cruiser Squadron and the 4th Submarine Flotilla, together with coastal forces and escort vessels. Of the squadron, five cruisers[4] were based on Ceylon; other units were either in African harbours or in Home waters, preparing to join the fleet. Trincomalee was being organised as a fleet base: during the winter months, work proceeded on the laying of warship and auxiliary moorings, and the building of wharves, jetties, and sheds. Progress was hindered by lack of local labour; but by the expedient of using servicemen (including Royal Marine engineers) on the work it was possible to receive reinforcements for the fleet, including the 1st Battle Squadron,[5] by the end of January.

68. Most of the destroyers—the 4th, 7th and 11th Flotillas—were either dispersed in the Mediterranean or engaged in protecting trade in the Indian Ocean and in South African waters; since its maintenance was essential to the war effort in India, South-East Asia Command and the South-West Pacific Area. For this reason, and because until March they were required for convoy escort duties, no destroyers were available to escort the fleet: it was therefore impossible to carry out any sweeps, and operations during the winter were confined to submarine and coastal force warfare. In October a submarine depot ship[6] had arrived in Colombo; and in December the

[1] Editor of the "Sunday Despatch".
[2] Former Editor of the "Evening Standard".
[3] The British national press generously supplied "SEAC" with much news and many feature items, free.
[4] H.M.S. NEWCASTLE, KENYA, CEYLON, SUFFOLK and SUSSEX.
[5] Two battleships (QUEEN ELIZABETH and VALIANT), one Battle Cruiser (RENOWN) and two Fleet Carriers (ILLUSTRIOUS and the Fleet Air Arm Repair and Supply ship UNICORN acting as a carrier), under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Power. (See 'B', paragraph 277.)
[6] H.M.S. ADAMANT.

4th Submarine Flotilla[1] was moved to Trincomalee. Before the end of the year it had begun offensive operations, and was playing a considerable part in disrupting the enemy's sea lines of communication, upon which he relied so much for the supply of his forces in Burma and the Netherlands East Indies.

69. It had been decided at the Casablanca Conference (SYMBOL) in January, 1943, that amphibious operations would take place before the south-west monsoon of May, 1944; and the remnants of Force "G" (the Overseas Assault Force, which had been disbanded and scattered on completion of the invasion of Sicily) had therefore been detached to South-East Asia. But most of this Force—under Rear-Admiral T. H. (later Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas) Troubridge, who flew his flag in H.M.S. BULOLO—was recalled to the Mediterranean in December. The remainder, together with a few ships which had always been in South-East Asia, became Force "F" (under Commodore (later Vice-Admiral) C. E. Douglas-Pennant, who hoisted his broad pennant in H.M.S. ROYAL SCOTSMAN); but this also was recalled to the European theatre in January.[2]

### DISPOSITION OF LAND FORCES

70. In November, 1943, 11 Army Group under General Giffard comprised the newly-formed Fourteenth Army, Ceylon Army Command, certain Indian Ocean garrisons, and certain Nepalese troops (for the Kingdom of Nepal, in addition to supplying the men for twenty-two Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army for S.E.A.C., provided three battalions and ancillary forces of their own Army). Fourteenth Army, which was commanded by Lieut.-General Slim, who exercised operational control of all the land forces on the Burma front, consisted of 4 Corps and 15 Corps. (4 Corps was "British"; 15 Corps was "Indian"[3]—according to whether their Headquarters had been raised in the United Kingdom or in India. But since these corps were arbitrarily composed of British, Indian, East African and West African divisions which were interchangeable, all national designations of corps are omitted in this Report.) Ceylon Army Command consisted of 82 West African Division, 11 East African Division, and 99 Indian Infantry Brigade; as well as of Command troops, including five battalions of the Ceylon Light Infantry.

71. In November, 1943, we were in contact with the Japanese on three major land fronts: in Arakan (with a minor front in the Chin Hills); in Assam; and in Northern Burma (with a minor isolated front around the Fort Hertz area).[4] The Arakan front stretched from the coast of the Bay of Bengal into the Arakan Hill Tracts to the east: the inaccessibility of these precluded the need for establishing a precise boundary. On this front, which was held by 15 Corps, commanded by Lieut.-General Christison—who had succeeded Lieut.-General Slim in October—5 and 7 Indian Divisions were just taking over from 26 Indian Division, and 81 West African Division was just arriving.[5]

72. The Central front, in Assam, lay between the Chin Hills and the Arakan Hill Tracts in the west, and the boundary of Lieut.-General Stilwell's command to the east—a line Mawlu (Map 7–E.5)–Taro (C.5)–Wakching (C.3). On this front 4 Corps, commanded by Lieut.-General G. A. P. (later Sir Geoffrey) Scoones, and comprising 17 Indian Light Division, 20 and 23 Indian Divisions, guarded the approaches south and east of Manipur: a role which it had carried out since 1942. It was also carrying out development projects in rear and forward areas with a view to offensive operations while the forward troops were carrying out successful patrolling. On the Central front there was also the Lushai Brigade (consisting of three battalions of regular Indian infantry regiments, organised on an independent brigade group basis); and the Chin Hills, which covered the overland approaches to Chittagong, were garrisoned by two detachments of Levies, stiffened each by one regular battalion.

73. The Northern Burma front was known as the Northern Combat Area Command (N.C.A.C.). Lieut.-General Stilwell was in charge of the American-Chinese Task Force operating on this front. This force, based on Ledo, consisted of 22 and 38 Chinese Divisions (with 30 Chinese Division in reserve), which had been equipped and trained by the Americans, and were fed and paid by the British. At Fort Hertz there was a small garrison, consisting mainly of Kachin Levies under British officers, which was transferred to Lieut.-General Stilwell's command on the 1st February, 1944. In addition to the above, a special force was being formed in Central India and trained by Brigadier (now promoted Major-General) Wingate in long-range penetration technique. This force was

[1] Consisting of six British 'T' class, three British 'S' class one Dutch 'K' class and one Dutch 'O' class; total, eleven submarines.
[2] See 'B', paragraphs 22–25.
[3] 33 and 34 Corps, which later joined Fourteenth Army, were "Indian".
[4] See Map 5 (before page 1).
[5] British divisions contained 100 per cent. British personnel; Indian divisions contained approximately 30 per cent. British personnel and 70 per cent. Indians and Gurkhas; East and West African divisions had British officers and a high proportion of British N.C.O's.

given the "cover" name of 3 Indian Division; but since it consisted of six Long-Range Penetration Brigades organised in columns instead of in battalions it will be referred to in this Report as the "Special Force." It was composed mainly of British troops, most of them from 70 British Division; but included Gurkha units of the Indian Army and a West African Brigade. 5307 U.S. Provisional Infantry Regiment[1] was also being trained by Major-General Wingate in the same area; and in the west of India, 33 Corps[2] (which consisted of 2 British Division and 36 Indian Division[3] and 19 and 25 Indian Divisions, and which was later to be attached to the Fourteenth Army) was being trained for amphibious operations.

### DISPOSITION OF AIR FORCES

74. Since 1942 the air forces had been on the defensive; and the Japanese Air Force had enjoyed air superiority which we, with our almost total lack of offensive aircraft, had been unable to contest. But we had obtained some slight success in the air just before the 1943 monsoon, and during the monsoon itself, when the Japanese Air Force had been largely inactive and our fighters had carried out limited patrols. Later in 1943, Air Chief Marshal Peirse and his commanders had reorganised the air forces from their deployment for the defence of India. Communications and maintenance facilities had been improved, and new forward airfields built from which short-range fighters could operate.

75. The Air Command, South East Asia, was formed on the 16th November, 1943. Unlike the organisation for the Army, the Air Command embraced the whole of the Royal Air Force in South-East Asia including India, except a small force for the protection of the North-West Frontier which remained under General Auchinleck's Command. In the Air Command we had a total of 46 R.A.F., 6 R.I.A.F., 1 R.C.A.F., 1 Netherlands and 17 U.S.A.A.F. operational squadrons with an effective strength of 723 aircraft of which 204 were American. These were divided as follows:—224 Group, R.A.F., on the Arakan Front, 221 Group, R.A.F., on the point of moving to the Central Front in Assam, the Northern Air Sector Force, U.S.A.A.F., on the N.C.A.C. front in Northern Burma, and 222 Group, R.A.F., in Ceylon.

The enemy had approximately 285 aircraft concentrated on forward airfields at He-ho (Map 7–J.5), Anisakan (five miles south-west of Maymyo—G.5), Rangoon (N.5) and Chieng-Mai (L.7), with the remainder at rear bases in Siam and the Netherlands East Indies. But our numerical preponderance in operational aircraft was largely offset by the number and range of our defensive commitments; moreover, at this time we possessed no fighters with sufficient range to reach the enemy's rear bases, whilst our Hurricanes were no real match for the enemy's Zeros except at high altitudes.[4] Air effort was therefore chiefly directed towards obtaining air superiority, so as to protect the air line to China and the air-supply of our troops in the coming battles.

76. The first Spitfires arrived in Bengal early in November, and were based on Chittagong, in order to protect the port and give support to operations in Arakan. They soon started to achieve success against enemy reconnaissance and fighter sorties; and on the last day of the year they defeated a force of Japanese bombers and fighters which was trying to attack light naval forces off the coast of Arakan. On the 15th January, they won an even more conspicuous success, when two Spitfire squadrons engaged more than 40 enemy fighters over Akyab: the superiority of Spitfires in the interceptor-fighter role, for which the Hurricanes had insufficient climb and altitude, was confirmed. As our fighter effort gathered strength, the scale of operations by the Allied Troop Carrier Command was also increasing. On the 2nd January, Troop Carrier Command moved its Headquarters to Comilla, in order to be near those of the Third Tactical Air Force and Fourteenth Army; which led to closer integration, not only in tactical matters but in the complex details of all the administration (such as aerodrome construction, supply-loading, and maintenance) that was being undertaken by the Fourteenth Army on behalf of the Air Force.

77. By the time the first land operations were due, the fighter squadrons, both short-range and long-range,[5] had for some time been beating down the Japanese Air Force; and we had been able to achieve air superiority, which it had not been possible to do with Hurricanes. Our long-range fighters (at this time all American) brought the air-war into enemy country by deep penetration; so that our short-range fighters defeated him when he attacked us, and our long-range fighters defeated him when we attacked him. This

[1] See 'A', paragraph 5.
[2] Under Lieut.-General M. G. (later Sir Montagu) Stopford, who had succeeded Lieut.-General Christison in November.
[3] This consisted of two British brigades, and of divisional troops, some of which were Indian; but it was called "Indian" for "cover" purposes. It was later renamed 36 British Division.
[4] When I visited Chittagong on the 13th October, 1943, I found that a raid by 23 Japanese bombers had just taken place, and that we had lost 3 Hurricanes shot down, failing to bring down a single Japanese aircraft.
[5] See 'B', paragraph 149.

superiority was maintained during the land battles; and it proved possible for U.S. and British squadrons of Troop Carrier Command to supply our troops when they were surrounded in Arakan, and again, later, in the battles around Imphal. This could not have happened if the fighter squadrons had not started to beat down the Japanese Air Force during the days which preceded the land battles, and kept them down while transport operations were actually in progress.

ENEMY FORCES

*(i) The Japanese High Command*

78. The Japanese Expeditionary Forces in the Southern Regions consisted of all Japanese army and army air forces in Burma, Malaya, the Andamans and Nicobars, the Netherlands East Indies, Siam, French Indo-China, Borneo, and the Philippines. They were under the command of Field-Marshal Count Terauchi, former Minister of the Army and member of the Japanese Supreme War Council.

79. Japan's senior service was the Army, to which also her main air forces belonged; though the Navy also possessed an air arm. In all defence matters, the Emperor (as Supreme Commander) was advised by his Board of Field-Marshals and Admirals of the Fleet (an advisory committee of elder princes formerly in the services), and by his Supreme War Council (which included the Ministers of the Army and the Navy and the Chiefs of the Military and Naval General Staffs). Decisions of the Supreme War Council were submitted to the Emperor, and after approval were passed to Imperial General Headquarters, which operated only in war or other national emergency. This Headquarters consisted of a joint Army and Navy establishment headed by the Chiefs of Staff of both services; and it was from here that Field-Marshal Terauchi usually received his orders signed either by the Prime Minister, Army Minister, or the Chief of the General Staff. He could, if he wished, appeal against their decisions; and he had the right of direct access to the Throne. In the same way, all Army/Air operations were outlined at Field-Marshal Terauchi's Headquarters and planned in detail at Third Air Army Headquarters[1] (the Supreme Army Air Command in the Southern Regions, which controlled all Japanese air operations in South-East Asia). The only direct communication which Third Air Army had with Tokyo was in regard to matters of force maintenance and supply.

80. Field-Marshal Terauchi had at this time no direct control of naval forces in the Southern Regions;[2] and his orders from Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo had instructed him to carry out his tasks "in co-operation with the navy", if necessary. All Japanese naval operations in South-East Asia were controlled from the Headquarters of the South-West Area Fleet,[3] which was the senior naval formation in the area of Field-Marshal Terauchi's army command. The South-West Area Fleet, which was commanded by Vice-Admiral Okauchi (with whom the Field-Marshal's Assistant Chief of Staff acted as liaison), came under the direct strategic control of Imperial General Headquarters.

81. So far as strategy and operations were concerned, Field-Marshal Terauchi was the supreme commander ; he was also responsible for the Military Administration of the occupied territories. His chain of command corresponded approximately to my own; but differed from it in one important respect. Whereas, in addition to separate naval and air headquarters, I had also a separate military headquarters working under my own supreme headquarters, the Japanese supreme headquarters acted also as an army headquarters for the Southern Regions. Field-Marshal Terauchi (like General Eisenhower[4]) was therefore military Commander-in-Chief in addition to Supreme Commander. All detailed planning and matters of local strategy were left to his army commanders; and it will be seen later how even such a major decision as the withdrawal from Rangoon in April, 1945, was made by the Commander of the Burma Area Army on his own initiative, and against his Supreme Commander's directive.

*(ii) Japanese dispositions*[5]

82. In November, 1943, the Japanese had five infantry divisions in Burma, and a sixth was on the way. 55 Japanese Division was in Arakan, under the direct command of Burma Area Army (Lieut.-General Kawabe), whose Headquarters at Rangoon controlled all occupied Burma; while the remaining four were under the command of the Fifteenth Japanese Army (Lieut.-General Mutaguchi), which was subordinate to Burma Area Army and had its Headquarters at Maymyo. They consisted of: 31 Japanese Division (recently arrived from Malaya) and 33 Japanese Division, both on the Upper Chindwin, threatening

[1] Both Field-Marshal Terauchi's Headquarters and Third Air Army Headquarters were at Singapore. In April, 1944, Field-Marshal Terauchi's Headquarters were transferred to Manila; and in November, 1944, to Saigon.

[2] In February, 1945, he was given full strategic and operational control of all naval forces in his Command. (See 'B', paragraphs 564, 605 and 643.)

[3] At Penang. Under its command was the 1st Southern Expeditionary Fleet, with Headquarters in Singapore.

[4] General (later General of the Army) Dwight D. Eisenhower combined the duties of Supreme Commander and Land Forces Commander-in-Chief in the early stages of the North-West African campaign and all but the first three months of the North-West European campaign.

[5] See Annexure 2.

the boundary of India; 18 Japanese Division, opposing the N.C.A.C. forces in Northern Burma; and 56 Japanese Division, facing the Yunnan forces on the China border. (54 Japanese Division was in process of moving into lower Arakan from Java.)

83. 5 Japanese Air Division, with joint Headquarters at Rangoon and Moulmein, controlled all fighter, bomber, and other units throughout Burma. A force of Marines (about one battalion combatant strength) was deployed at Rangoon, Moulmein, Mergui, and at smaller key-points on the Tenasserim coast, as well as at Akyab, Taungup, and elsewhere on the Arakan coast, for the defence and maintenance of naval installations.

84. Elsewhere in South-East Asia, the Japanese had strong army and navy forces, with ancillary air forces. Malaya held an infantry division and two garrison brigades; while South-West Area Fleet[1] was based on Penang; and, subordinate to it, the First Southern Expeditionary Fleet[2] was based on Singapore. In Sumatra, the Twenty-fifth Japanese Army comprised two infantry divisions and two independent brigades, and was supported by an army air division; while an infantry division and an independent brigade garrisoned Siam. The estimated total strength of Japanese forces within the South-East Asia Command at this time was approximately 350,000, of whom rather less than one-half were in Burma.

[1] Heavy cruiser ASHIGARA. Light cruisers KITAKAMI, OOI, KUMA.

[2] Training cruiser KASHII. Heavy cruiser AOBA. Torpedo boat KARI. Minelayer HATSUTAKA.

# SYNOPSIS

## B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

### SECTION ONE: OCTOBER 1943 TO FEBRUARY 1944

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Strategical situation in South-East Asia; Discussions with the Generalissimo; Directive from the Prime Minister; Operation CULVERIN planned and cancelled; Operation BUCCANEER planned; Operations planned for the first half of 1944; The Cairo Conference; Additional resources promised for Operation BUCCANEER; Meeting with the Generalissimo at Ramgarh; Integration of the Air Forces in the Command; Operation BUCCANEER cancelled; Chiefs of Staff request proposals for a reduced amphibious operation; Force "G" recalled to the Mediterranean; Generalissimo asked to accept reduced operation (PIGSTICK); Generalissimo cancels the advance of the Yunnan Force; Operation PIGSTICK planned and cancelled; All amphibious operations cancelled; Force "F" recalled to the Mediterranean; Directives to the Commanders-in-Chief; Views on long-term strategy communicated to the Chiefs of Staff; Proposal to send a Mission to London and Washington; AXIOM Mission leaves Delhi.

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The Arakan front (November, 1943–January, 1944); the Central front (November, 1943–February, 1944); the N.C.A.C. front (October, 1943–February, 1944); Preparation of the Long-Range Penetration Brigades; arrival of No. 1 Air Commando.

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In the Autumn of 1943, the situation in South-East Asia was not encouraging. The Japanese were in firm possession of the whole perimeter from Northern Burma to New Guinea through Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies.[1] Their forces dominated the Bay of Bengal; ours were clinging precariously to the north-eastern approaches to India, with lines of communication that were barely adequate for purposes of defence, let alone for attack.[2] In Burma, the Japanese had at this time five divisions, consisting of some 135,000 men: the normal composition of a Japanese Army. But a "Burma Area Army" Headquarters had been raised in Rangoon, and since an Area Army Headquarters would not have been set up to control only one Army, this fact indicated that a considerable increase of strength, and probably of offensive operations, was being contemplated. Elsewhere in South-East Asia, our forces were not even in contact with the enemy, being based far from his perimeter. The establishment of initial contact in these other areas could only be achieved with ample amphibious resources; subsequent offensives would have to depend for maintenance on long sea communications.

2. At the Quebec Conference it had been decided to carry out operations for the capture of Upper Burma in order to improve the air route and to undertake, in the early Spring of 1944, amphibious operations based on India. There were two divergent conceptions of strategic policy in South-East Asia. The Americans, on the one hand, regarded Assam and Burma primarily as part of the air and land line to China; the British, on the other hand, saw the liberation of Burma as an end in itself, and as a step on the road to Malaya and Singapore. It seemed necessary to establish the fact that, although the two conceptions were divergent in motive, in execution they were complementary and inseparable. The land line to China could not be re-opened without the reconquest of Northern Burma; and the conquest of the whole of Northern Burma was essential if air-supply to China (over mountain ranges colloquially known as "the Hump") was to be adequately protected against air attack from the south. Northern Burma could not be permanently secured unless Burma were occupied as far down as Rangoon; and this in turn could not be done without a comprehensive system of air-supply to the troops engaged in the overland advance; while a seaborne and airborne assault from the south would greatly help the advance from the north—and indeed, at this time, seemed an essential part of the campaign.

3. It was clear, not only that considerable forces of transport aircraft would be required for land operations in Burma, but that it might be found necessary to withdraw resources from the air route to China, in its own ultimate interest. So far as amphibious operations went, our resources were sufficient for an assault on the Andaman Islands; but more landing ships and landing craft, as well as additional army formations, would have to be made available before anything on a larger scale could be undertaken. Unfortunately, however, the South-East Asia Command was starting at the bottom of the priority list, and was likely to remain there for a long time. Having been a member of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee for some eighteen months before going to South-East Asia, I fully appreciated the effect that the world shortage and the exigencies of operations in Europe and in the Pacific must have on our being allowed to retain what meagre resources were at our disposal—not to speak of their effect on our chances of obtaining more in the future.

4. But this over-riding factor condemned our strategy to being planned against a background of perpetual uncertainty about higher policy. Allocations which appeared to be "firm", were often to be revoked soon afterwards; and even from our slender resources, we were occasionally ordered to divert landing craft and ships, transport aircraft, artillery ammunition, and other materials, to theatres with a prior claim. More than once, when our detailed plans were cancelled at the last moment, we were to be compelled to improvise; and it was not easy to decide, at short notice, how to make the best use of what remained.

5. Before joint British, American and Chinese military and air operations in Burma, as well as amphibious operations in the Bay of Bengal, could be planned for the 1943–44 dry season, it would be necessary to decide how the available air resources could best be shared among the three nations concerned. The first essential was to find out to what extent the Generalissimo was prepared to co-operate

[1] See Map 1 (before page 1).

[2] See Map 8 (facing page 28).

in the coming campaign; and I therefore went to visit him personally, nine days after my arrival in South-East Asia. On arriving in Chungking, I held an informal conference attended by senior members of the British Military Mission; by the American Lieut.-Generals Stilwell and Somervell; Major-General Wheeler, my new P.A.O.; and by the two American Air Commanders, Major-General G. Stratemeyer[1] and Major-General C. Chennault.[2] We discussed the co-ordination of British-American air effort in South-East-Asia; air-supply over the Hump; and the support which air operations would give to the land operations in Burma.

6. Formal conferences were then held with the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang, the Minister for War (General Ho Ying Chin), and various members of the Chinese General Staff. The parts which British, American and Chinese forces would take in the coming campaign were discussed; and it was agreed that no major operations could be undertaken until after January. It was decided, in principle, that two Chinese forces, one based on Ledo and the other in Yunnan, should undertake operations to clear the Japanese from North-Eastern Burma. The Ledo Force would be under the direct operational control of Lieut.-General Stilwell. The Yunnan armies were to be directly under a Chinese commander-in-chief, General Chen Cheng[3] Both these forces were to come, through Lieut.-General Stilwell, under my over-all command—but in the case of the Yunnan Force, not until it had crossed the frontier into Burma.

7. I made it clear that no date could be guaranteed for achieving the first target of 10,000 tons a month of air-supply to China over the Hump; for if operations were undertaken which largely depended on air-supply, Hump tonnage could not be given over-riding priority. British operations would include an advance into Central Burma from Imphal, and one on the coast of Arakan; an operation by six Long-Range Penetration Brigades; and an amphibious operation, the exact nature of which would be decided later. The Generalissimo, who laid great stress on the need for a successful amphibious operation, and a decisive naval victory, said he hoped we would have a superior fleet in the Bay of Bengal. I replied that I had not yet received specific assurances of a big build-up for the fleet, but that I expected naval reinforcements to arrive very soon. The Generalissimo accepted this; but made his support contingent on an amphibious operation being carried out, supported by an adequate battle-fleet.

8. On the 24th October, the day after my return from the discussions at Chungking, I received my first directive from the Prime Minister.[4] This confirmed the instructions concerning my appointment; and repeated the strategical decisions which had been taken at Quebec, by which I was given two main tasks to perform. Firstly, the enemy was to be engaged as closely and continuously as possible, and his forces (especially his air forces) worn down so that he would be compelled to divert reinforcements from the Pacific theatre. Secondly, but of no less importance, I was to maintain and enlarge our contacts with China, both by the air route, and by making direct contact in Northern Burma by the use (amongst other methods) of suitably organised, air-supplied ground forces of the greatest possible strength. Full use was to be made of the advantage which the sea-power and air-power at my disposal would give me. In putting forward my proposals for amphibious operations in 1944, I was to choose a point, or points, of attack, whose seizure would induce a powerful reaction from the enemy; and this point, or points, must provide options for a further stroke planned in the light of this reaction.

9. The Prime Minister's directive specified that, at least four weeks before my first major amphibious operation, H.M. Government would provide me with a battle-fleet, based on Ceylon; and that this would be sufficiently strong to fight a general engagement with any force which it was considered the Japanese could afford to detach from the Pacific. The directive further specified that for this purpose the Eastern Fleet would be equipped with at least ten escort carriers, as well as with such armoured fleet carriers as might be available. In view of the Generalissimo's attitude, this news was extremely welcome; for I knew that it would clinch his participation in the coming Burma campaign.

10. The Commanders-in-Chief, and Lieut.-General Pownall and Major-General Wedemeyer, who were jointly examining plans for the Burma campaign, had been instructed to make a particular study of CULVERIN—an amphibious operation which the Prime Minister particularly wished carried out in Northern Sumatra. The only resources at our disposal for this were those which at the Casablanca Conference had been allotted to India Command and the Eastern Fleet for amphibious operations against Akyab and Ramree Island; and we had been given to understand, in previous discussions in London, that it was unlikely that we should obtain any more. It was estimated that it would not be possible to carry out the operation

[1] Commanding the 10th U.S. Air Force in South-East Asia.
[2] Commanding the 14th U.S. Air Force in China.
[3] Subsequently replaced on account of sickness.
[4] See Appendix C.

with these resources alone: this conclusion was communicated to the Chiefs of Staff on the 17th October and they were asked for a decision. On the 28th October, the Chiefs of Staff telegraphed that no further resources would be available to the theatre; this made the projected assault on Sumatra out of the question, and CULVERIN was cancelled at once.

11. The next best objective, and one which was within the scope of the resources actually in South-East Asia, or definitely allocated to the Command, appeared to be the Andaman Islands. These lay in the middle of the enemy's outer perimeter of air and naval bases,[1] which stretched from Southern Burma to Sumatra; the seizure of the airfield at Port Blair would breach this perimeter and afford shore-based fighter cover for amphibious convoys passing through it. It would also provide a base for reconnaissance of the Kra Isthmus, Malaya, and Sumatra; and, more important, for bombing the recently completed Bangkok–Moulmein railway, and shipping in the Gulf of Siam. Port Blair harbour would also provide a valuable advanced naval base for light forces and landing craft. This operation was unlikely to induce a powerful reaction from the enemy; but, since it would provide a good base for future operations as soon as new resources became available, it would at least give several options for a subsequent amphibious stroke; and would therefore partly fulfil the terms of my directive.

12. Through November, intensive planning was carried out by all the staffs; and by the third week in November seven separate, but related operations had been decided on:—

(*a*) the capture of the Andaman Islands by amphibious assault (BUCCANEER) by 33 Corps, with naval, and naval air support ;

(*b*) on the Arakan front[2], an advance by 15 Corps, supported by 224 Group, R.A.F., and naval coastal forces, to secure positions further south on the Mayu Peninsula and along the Arakan coast. (This involved an advance up to and including the Maungdaw–Buthidaung road and, eventually, the capture of Akyab with amphibious forces);

(*c*) on the Central front,[3] an advance by 4 Corps supported by 221 Group, R.A.F., across the Chindwin river;

(*d*) on the N.C.A.C. front,[4] an advance by Lieut.-General Stilwell's Chinese Army in India, supported by the Northern Air Sector Force, down the Hukawng Valley to the Myitkyina[5]–Mogaung area to secure the trace of the Ledo Road into China.

The operations on the N.C.A.C. front were to be supplemented by:—

(*e*) an advance by the Chinese Expeditionary Force from Yunnan supported by the 14th U.S. Air Force from Paoshan to Bhamo and Lashio, to secure the China end of the Ledo Road;

(*f*) operations in support of (*d*) and (*e*) by Major-General Wingate's Special Force, supported by No. 1 Air Commando and the Third Tactical Air Force; and

(*g*) the capture, by 50 Indian Parachute Brigade, of the airfield at Rail Indaw, with the subsequent fly-in by Troop Carrier Command of 26 Indian Division, who were to hold the town until Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces could reach Mogaung—when the two were to join forces along the railway.

13. It was important that early approval for operations should be obtained from the Combined Chiefs of Staff; for Lease-Lend equipment was only released in the United States for operations which had been approved. Owing to our low priority we were not in a position to accumulate stocks; and we were also at the end of a very long line of communication—which meant that it took a long time for stores from the United States to reach the theatre, be sorted out, and finally be delivered to the troops.

14. I had been invited to attend the Cairo Conference (SEXTANT); and arrived in Cairo on the 21st November. The Generalissimo had been invited to arrive at the same time as myself; there was therefore no time for me to lay my plans before the British Chiefs of Staff, let alone the Combined Chiefs of Staff, before the first plenary meeting of the Generalissimo with the President, the Prime Minister, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff, took place. At this meeting, those South-East Asia plans which concerned the Generalissimo were formulated and approved; but he made the participation of the Yunnan Expeditionary Force conditional on my carrying out an amphibious operation concurrently. I had told him at Chungking that I intended to do this; and the President and Prime Minister now gave him an assurance that the operation would take place, and that a large Allied fleet would be in the Bay of Bengal. The Generalissimo objected to any reduction of the monthly air-lift into China; but it was made clear to him that the target

[1] See Map 21 (on page 93).
[2] See 'A', paragraph 71; and Maps 5 and 7 (before page 1).
[3] See 'A', paragraph 72; and Maps 5 and 7.
[4] See 'A', paragraph 73; and Maps 5 and 7.
[5] Pronounced "Mitchinar".

figure could not be guaranteed while land operations were in progress. After the President had explained that no more U.S. transport aircraft could be spared for our two theatres, the Generalissimo agreed to accept a reduced figure if diversions became necessary. But he asked that all possible steps should be taken by the U.S. Air Transport Command to maintain a lift of at least 10,000 tons; and this was agreed to.

15. At subsequent meetings of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, all the South-East Asia plans for early 1944 were approved, and the necessary resources allocated. I was given an assurance that additional resources would be sent to my theatre on the defeat of Germany, which was then expected to take place before the Winter of 1944. The Royal Air Force target alone was to be 154 squadrons by October, 1944. The Eastern Fleet was to be built up to a size capable of engaging the largest battle-fleet the Japanese were likely to be able to send to Singapore; and was eventually to include an amphibious lift for three divisions. It was decided that six more aircraft carriers would be required for BUCCANEER, to meet the Japanese air threat; but these could not be spared from British resources. I reminded Admiral King that he had told me, when I reported to him officially in Washington, to call on him if I ever needed U.S. men-of-war; and he at once generously offered to place six aircraft-carriers at my disposal for this operation.[1]

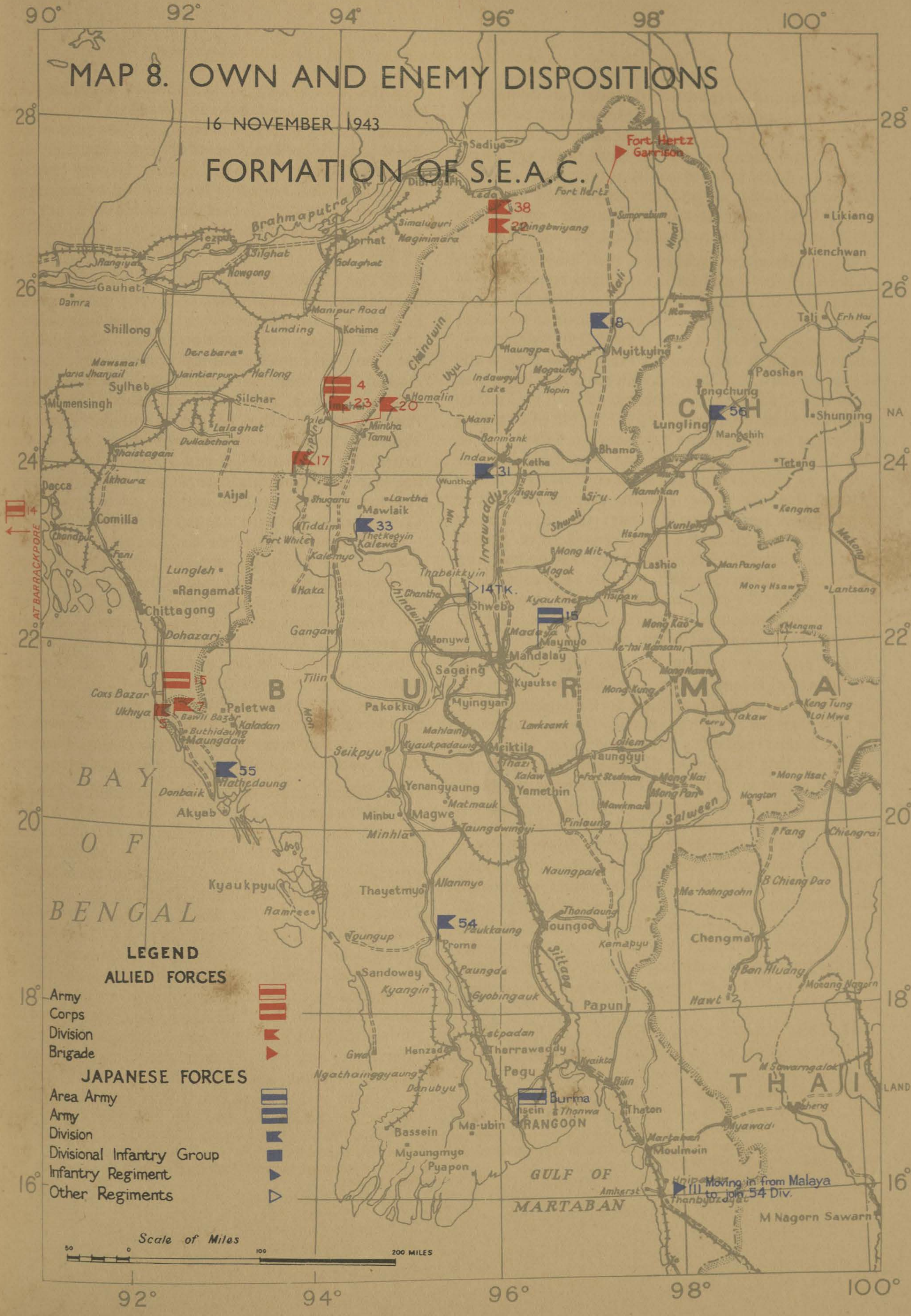
16. I returned to Delhi on the 27th November; and flew to Ramgarh on the 30th to meet the Generalissimo on his way back to Chungking. After we had together inspected 10,000 Chinese troops of Lieut.-General Stilwell's command, and had both addressed them on parade, he formally placed all the Chinese forces in India and Burma under my command.[2] It had been difficult, at Cairo, to obtain a precise statement from the Chinese on any major point; for, unlike the President and the Prime Minister, the Generalissimo did not delegate authority to members of his staff; with the result that points which were understood to have been agreed on by all the staffs concerned, were subsequently challenged by the Generalissimo in person. I now took the opportunity of clearing various points with him concerning the operations in Northern Burma which we were to carry out jointly.

17. I also notified him of the fact that the political paragraph which he had added to the "gentleman's agreement",[3] after I had agreed the military paragraph, was not acceptable to the Prime Minister. I was able to confirm, however, that the Generalissimo regarded the military paragraph itself as binding; and that, as well as operations in Siam and French Indo-China, the agreement covered the introduction into those countries of Intelligence officers. I communicated my clearance of this point to my Deputy Chief of Staff, who had remained in Cairo with other senior members of my staff, so that they could take up any outstanding points with the British and U.S. Chiefs of Staff on the latter's return from the Teheran Conference.[4]

18. At Cairo, I had taken up the question of integrating the British and U.S. air forces in South-East Asia, which I considered an essential condition for air planning and future operations. But it had not been brought forward on the agenda ; since General Arnold had told me that in my place he would certainly do this, while Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal (later Marshal of the Royal Air Force the Viscount Portal of Hungerford—the Chief of the British Air Staff) and General Marshall, had agreed—the last-named adding that it was within my competence as Theatre Commander to reorganise the Command as I saw fit. On my return from SEXTANT, I found that an incident had occurred which will indicate the unsatisfactory situation which existed. Before going to Cairo, I had ordered that reinforcements should be flown to Fort Hertz; and since the Fort Hertz garrison was primarily engaged in protecting U.S. airfields, I had ordered that the 10th U.S. Army Air Force should fly them in. While Lieut.-General Stilwell and I were in Cairo, his Headquarters had cancelled this order without informing my Headquarters; and as a result the first elements of the Burma Regiment had actually been turned back in the air, and landed at the airfields they had started from.

19. When I heard of this, I promptly drafted orders for the integration of the two air forces[5]. When I showed the integration order to Lieut.-General Stilwell on the 11th December, he objected very strongly—but I signed it and issued it on the same day, while forwarding his written protest to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. All the Allied air forces throughout South-East Asia were now put under Air Chief Marshal Peirse, who became the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief. Major-General Stratemeyer was appointed as his second-in-command; and was given direct command of Eastern Air Command, which was formed to control those Allied air forces fighting in the Burma campaign. The new Eastern Air Command Headquarters, which controlled all the operational air units in Assam and Bengal, consisted basically of the Operations Section of the old 10th U.S. Army Air

[1] Operation BUCCANEER was cancelled (see 'B', paragraph 21); so the need for them did not arise.
[2] See 'B', paragraph 6.
[3] See 'A', paragraph 17 and Appendix D.
[4] This conference (EUREKA) had followed immediately on the one at Cairo.
[5] See Appendix E.


MAP 8. OWN AND ENEMY DISPOSITIONS
16 NOVEMBER 1943
FORMATION OF S.E.A.C.
LEGEND
ALLIED FORCES
Army
Corps
Division
Brigade
JAPANESE FORCES
Area Army
Army
Division
Divisional Infantry Group
Infantry Regiment
Other Regiments
Scale of Miles
50
0
100
200 MILES
Fort Hertz Garrison
AT BARRACKPORE
14
Moving in from Malaya to join 54 Div.
14 TK.
Burma
BAY OF BENGAL
GULF OF MARTABAN
BURMA
CHINA
THAILAND
Brahmaputra
Chindwin
Irrawaddy
Salween
Sittang
Mekong
Shweli
Sadiya
Dibrugarh
Ledo
Fort Hertz
Sumprabum
Jorhat
Tezpur
Gauhati
Shillong
Sylhet
Silchar
Kohima
Imphal
Tamu
Homalin
Myitkyina
Bhamo
Lashio
Mandalay
Sagaing
Shwebo
Monywa
Meiktila
Chittagong
Comilla
Dacca
Cox's Bazar
Maungdaw
Buthidaung
Akyab
Kyaukpyu
Ramree
Prome
Thayetmyo
Toungoo
Pegu
RANGOON
Moulmein
Bassein
Magwe
Yenangyaung
Pakokku
Tiddim
Kalewa
Kalemyo
Haka
Tengchung
Paoshan
Lungling
Kengtung
Chiengmai
Chiengrai
Papun
Thaton
Martaban
Amherst
M Nagorn Sawarn
90°
92°
94°
96°
98°
100°
28°
26°
24°
22°
20°
18°
16°

Force organisation in the India–Burma sector, but now also included a Royal Air Force element. The forces under its command were divided into four main components: the Third Tactical Air Force,[1] a Strategic Air Force;[2] a Troop Carrier Command;[3] and a Photographic Reconnaissance Force.[4]

20. Major-General Stratemeyer reorganised the combat squadrons of 10th U.S. Army Air Force (excepting the heavy bombers) into the Northern Air Sector Force,[5] which was put under the command of H.Q. Third Tactical Air Force (Third T.A.F.). It was responsible for air support to the N.C.A.C. forces, and for the air defence of the air-ferry route over the Hump. 224 Group (which was responsible for air support to the Arakan front) and 221 Group (which was charged with air support to the Central front), were similarly put under the command of H.Q. Third T.A.F.; 221 Group moving their Headquarters from Calcutta to Imphal in December, so as to be alongside 4 Corps Headquarters. In due course, the Combined Chiefs of Staff approved the action I had taken; but the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff stipulated that, in view of their commitments to China, they reserved the right to transfer units from the 10th U.S.A.A.F., under Major-General Stratemeyer, to the 14th U.S.A.A.F., under Major-General Chennault, in China. Apart from the compromises which this entailed, the final arrangements proved to be simple and efficient.

21. On the 5th December, the Chiefs of Staff telegraphed that, as a result of the Teheran Conference, operations against the continent of Europe might be given over-riding priority; and that the bulk of my landing-craft might be withdrawn during the next few weeks. Since this would make BUCCANEER impossible, I was asked to suggest an alternative operation, on a smaller scale, which could be carried out in conjunction with the agreed British-American-Chinese land and air operations in Burma. I replied on the 6th December that no considerable operations in support of our amphibious strategy now appeared possible. In order to keep faith with the Generalissimo, however, and to use our few remaining amphibious resources to the best advantage, immediate investigations were begun into the feasibility of a reduced amphibious operation on the Arakan coast.

22. On the 7th December, I was ordered by the Chiefs of Staff to send back to Europe Force "G", which comprised more than half my amphibious resources; and since any operation against the Andamans was now also impracticable, the plan to breach the Japanese perimeter had to be postponed. I hoped, however, that the situation in Burma might still be retrieved, and I decided to employ Force "F" (which contained my few remaining amphibious resources) in a reduced amphibious operation (PIGSTICK), which the Commanders-in-Chief regarded as feasible with the resources that remained to us. It was planned to land 20,000 men (including the whole of 2 British Division) on the southern part of the Mayu Peninsula, behind the enemy dispositions in the northern half of the Peninsula, where they were facing 15 Corps; so as to cut off the greater part of 55 Japanese Division. This operation (if the Generalissimo could be induced to accept it) would at any rate keep the rest of my plans alive. And since neither the target for BUCCANEER, nor the number of troops involved, had been disclosed to the Generalissimo, I felt that an amphibious operation against the actual coast of Burma (even if it was on a smaller scale than the one which had been projected against the Andamans) would prove acceptable to him. I therefore instructed Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart to request him to accept it as the amphibious operation he had postulated.

23. The President had telegraphed to the Generalissimo, however, expressing his regret at the withdrawal of part of my amphibious resources; but stating that I would still carry out a reduced amphibious operation with what I had left, and that, as promised, we would keep naval control of the Bay of Bengal. Unfortunately, the President's telegram appears to have been taken by the Generalissimo as a breach of faith, although the transfer of the amphibious operation from the Andamans to Burma could hardly have affected the immediate operations of the Chinese forces. He replied that in cancelling BUCCANEER the President and Prime Minister were not keeping their part of the Cairo agreement; and that, though he was prepared to leave the Chinese Army in India at my disposal, he now considered himself released from his promise that the Expeditionary Force would advance from Yunnan. The fly-in of 26 Indian Division to Rail Indaw[6] was now cancelled; for it would have been difficult in any case to find sufficient transport aircraft to fly them in and maintain them there—but now that the Yunnan Force was not to advance, there was little point in expending any of our limited air transport on maintaining an isolated garrison at this point.

24. Even though the Generalissimo had not accepted it, planning for operation PIGSTICK went forward early in December. On a visit to the Arakan

[1] Under Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin.
[2] Under Brig.-General (later Major-General) H. C. Davidson, U.S.A.A.F.
[3] Under Brig.-General W. D. Old, U.S.A.A.F.
[4] Under Group Captain S. G. Wise.
[5] Under Colonel John F. Egan, U.S.A.A.F.
[6] See 'B', paragraph 12 (*g*).

front, on the 13th, I found the Army, Corps and Divisional Commanders greatly in favour of this operation. But on the 27th, the Commanders-in-Chief stated that unless firm approval could be obtained by the end of the month, it would not be possible to catch the favourable period in February; while by March the swell would be too great to enable the operation to be carried out—or at all events for the Army to be maintained across the beaches. I therefore gave them orders to go ahead with this operation, and I informed the Chiefs of Staff accordingly.

25. On the 30th, the Chiefs of Staff telegraphed that, in view of combined operations that were to be carried out in the European theatre—and the fact that the Generalissimo did not in any case regard PIGSTICK as an adequate substitute for BUCCANEER and would not let his Yunnan Force advance—the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had been asked to agree that all amphibious operations in South-East Asia should be abandoned. On the 7th January, PIGSTICK was definitely cancelled; and I was ordered to return all the fast Landing Ships, Tank, to England, and the remainder of Force "F" to the Mediterranean. No amphibious operation now remained possible before the south-west monsoon.

26. Our projected operations had now been reduced to four: an offensive without landing craft in Arakan, an advance from Ledo, operations by Long-Range Penetration Brigades, and a limited advance across the Chindwin river. None of these could result in a big strategic victory; nor could they achieve any of the major objectives laid down in my original directive from the Prime Minister; since these operations alone could not open the road to China during 1944, and the possibility of our engaging large numbers of enemy troops at numerous points now depended largely on the initiative of the Japanese themselves. I could not help feeling anxious about the possible effects of continued procrastination on our efforts at building up morale. It now seemed likely, however, that our operational effort in the first half of 1944 could not be reduced any further; and it was on this assumption that I issued a final directive to the Commanders-in-Chief on the 14th January, outlining their tasks in the operations to be undertaken.

27. At Cairo it had not been possible for me to give a considered opinion on long-term strategy, because my Headquarters had so recently been set up that there had not been time for a comprehensive survey of the general position. But by the beginning of January, a series of conclusions had been reached which in my opinion coincided with my general instructions as to strategy for South-East Asia—as well as fitting in with the wider pattern of operations in the Pacific. Moreover, now that only a greatly reduced scale of land and air operations would be possible, it seemed to me that a new conception for long-term strategy was needed for the theatre, and that my directive required modification in the light of recent developments.

28. These conclusions, which were telegraphed to the Chiefs of Staff on the 8th January, fell under four chief headings:—

(*a*) with regard to China, our first concern must be to maintain the 14th U.S.A.A.F., and to develop the plan for operating Super-Fortresses (B-29) from the Chengtu area of China, with rear bases in Bengal. In the last eight months of 1943, the 14th U.S.A.A.F. had destroyed a large amount of enemy shipping and aircraft; and they had achieved this on an approximate monthly supply-rate by air of 2,500 tons. If this supply-rate could be increased, it would mean the destruction of more enemy shipping and aircraft; but this could not be done so long as 14th U.S.A.A.F. priorities suffered from competition with those for other projects in China and the N.C.A.C. area of Burma;

(*b*) the cancellation of the Yunnan offensive and the Indaw operation[1] meant that the Ledo Road could not be extended into China during 1944; and that deliveries by this land route would not be on any appreciable scale, until the overall Pacific strategy was likely to give results. By this time, moreover, far greater deliveries would be possible by sea, if a different strategy were followed. The Ledo Road strategy was likely to become stale before the road had been secured and put into operation; and in any case the reconquest of the whole of Burma, which was essential for the eventual security of the road, would automatically re-open the old Burma Road. It seemed, therefore, that to continue the Ledo Road operation beyond what was required for the defence of the air route, would be to divert a valuable amount of material, labour, and haulage space from more essential objects;

(*c*) the main effort in South-East Asia must be co-ordinated with the main Allied thrusts from the central and south-west Pacific; and this could best be done by penetrating the enemy's perimeter in the Malaya–Netherlands East Indies area, and then taking a port in the China Sea. An essential preliminary to this would be the

[1] See 'B', paragraph 12 (*g*).

capture of Sumatra—which would in any case justify itself as an independent operation; and

(*d*) the main requirements for the ground forces could be found within the theatre; provided that operations in Northern Burma were confined to those moves which were required to secure the air route. But I required a substantial increase in shipping, landing craft, and seaborne air cover—all of which would presumably become available after the collapse of Germany.

29. Since it was important that representatives from S.E.A.C. should be available for consultations, at a time when the terms of my new directive were under review, I informed the Chiefs of Staff that I proposed to send a special Mission to London and Washington, which would present a detailed appreciation of my conclusions, and would be empowered to consult with the British and American Chiefs of Staff. The Chiefs of Staff gave permission for a Mission to be sent in a month's time. This month was spent in working out a detailed appreciation of future strategy; and the whole matter was finally considered on the 31st January, at a meeting attended by General Auchinleck, Lieut.-General Stilwell, and my Commanders-in-Chief. Although there was still some divergence of opinion as regards the timing of the operations I wished to carry out, all the commanders, except Lieut.-General Stilwell, agreed that they were highly desirable.

30. Lieut.-General Stilwell opposed a change in our long-term strategy; saying that he did not consider that we could bank on the defeat of Germany in October, 1944; and that even when Germany had collapsed, there might not be the men and the material available that we expected. I pointed out to Lieut.-General Stilwell that, apart from the consideration of Germany's defeat, the amphibious resources used in the invasion of France would in any case be available to us when the invasion had been successfully completed. He considered, however, that it would be better to recommend long-term operations based on the resources in hand, and to plan accordingly. Lieut.-General Stilwell did not accept my view that the route of advance to a port on the China coast was shorter via Sumatra and Malaya than via Burma and Yunnan; pointing out also that, whereas the difficulties of a campaign in Burma were known, those in Sumatra and the Kra Isthmus were still imponderable.

31. On the 5th February, the Mission (AXIOM), headed by Major-General Wedemeyer (one of the originators of the "sea" as opposed to the "road" strategy) left Delhi for London and Washington. Although I did not agree with the views that my Deputy, Lieut.-General Stilwell, had advanced, I directed that these should be fully and impartially presented to the British Chiefs of Staff and to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; but in one of his other capacities, Lieut.-General Stilwell considered it his duty to send his own Mission to Washington, ahead of mine, without informing me of the fact.

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In this Report, land operations are set out in greater detail than air operations : not only because, in the last analysis, the progress of a campaign is measured by the army's advance, and by its occupation of vital objectives—but also because air operations are too flexible and varied to fit easily into a chronological narrative. It is important, however, to remember that air operations—striking at the enemy's airfields; at his supply centres; at his ports and shipping; at his rail and road communications; at his forward concentrations, and also at his front-line positions—formed the background and the unceasing accompaniment to the land fighting. Land advances depended for their success on air protection from enemy interference. In most cases, the air forces provided the spearhead of the attack; during the operations they fought the enemy in the air and harried him on the ground; and after the battle, they continued to attack his communications and bases, and to weaken his fighting organisation. It will not be possible to form an authentic overall picture of the land-air campaign if this is not borne in mind.

(i) THE ARAKAN FRONT

33. Throughout the winter, operations had been carried out on the three main fronts, and were being planned for a subsidiary front behind the enemy lines. In Arakan, our aim was to secure positions from which we would eventually be able to capture Akyab with amphibious support.[1] In November, as soon as the ground had dried out sufficiently, 15 Corps had begun to advance from positions covering Cox's Bazaar, against the forward positions of 55 Japanese Division on the Mayu Peninsula. This was dominated by the Mayu Range, which rises very steeply to an average height of 1,000 feet. To the west of the range lies a flat coastal belt which stretches to the sea, and to the mouth of the Naaf river; to the east lies the Kalapanzin Valley. This flat country is mainly paddy, interspersed

[1] See 'B', paragraph 12 (*b*), Map 3 (before page 1) and Map 11 (facing page 44).

with local swamps, woods, tangled undergrowth and some grassland.

34. In the first Arakan campaign our forces had been on both sides of the range, but none had been on the range itself; and the Japanese had made tactical use of this, advancing along the summit, to split the British forces. In anticipation that this would again be their tactics, Lieut.-General Christison was ordered to capture the Maungdaw–Buthidaung road—a 16-mile metalled highway running laterally across the Japanese front and close behind their main positions. For so long as the enemy had this road, which tunnelled the upper parts of the Mayu Range and linked the port of Maungdaw with Buthidaung, he would be able to switch troops from one side of the range to the other. Until it could be taken—and in order to help us to take it—it was essential that we should also secure a lateral road, to link our two main forces on either side of the Mayu Range. 7 Indian Division therefore secured the Ngakyedauk[1] Pass; and a jeep track was made over the range. On the 20th November, the division started to move over this new track, and over the existing mule track across the Goppe Pass, and to deploy on both banks of the Kalapanzin River east of the range. The sappers and miners then set to work developing the jeep track into a military road. In the meantime, 5 Indian Division remained on the range, and to the west of it.

35. Though both the enemy and we ourselves now had a lateral road, the Japanese held a good metalled highway whilst we at this time only had a jeep track. The Japanese were already making full use of their road, but they had not advanced far beyond it since it could best be held by occupying the hills which commanded the approaches. As the monsoon floods subsided our patrols probed deeper towards the road, and reports were received that the Japanese had turned the area of the tunnels into a fortified area, buttressing it on either side of the range with two strong positions. The western of these lay in the coastal belt at Razabil, three miles east of Maungdaw. Lieut.-General Christison proposed to seize these two bastions and to leave the garrison of the central position of the tunnels to be destroyed later.

36. By the middle of December the stage had been set for the main attack on the enemy positions covering the Maungdaw–Buthidaung tunnels road. Since 2 British Division were to be landed on the Mayu Peninsula early in February, to catch the bulk of 55 Japanese Division between them and 15 Corps, the latter were told not to push ahead too far, so as to leave room for the amphibious forces to land behind the Japanese. But when this amphibious operation (PIGSTICK) had been cancelled, there was no point in delaying the advance of 15 Corps; Lieut.-General Christison was therefore told to push forward, and to clear the Mayu Peninsula far enough south to enable us to command the mouth of the Naaf river, for sea supply. The capture of Razabil and Maungdaw was assigned to 5 Indian Division, while 7 Indian Division was ordered to occupy Buthidaung and cut in on the rear of Letwedet.

37. In the previous Arakan campaign, the enemy had slipped round the eastern end of the front and threatened our lines of communication. Lieut.-General Slim therefore decided that 15 Corps should not only advance along either side of the Mayu Range, but should also throw out 81 West African Division as a further flank guard to march down the distant Kaladan Valley beyond the next mass of hills. These troops were to be supplied in their isolated advance against elements of 55 Japanese Division and an "Indian National Army" brigade,[2] by the transport squadrons of the newly-formed Troop Carrier Command.

38. On the 9th January Maungdaw fell, and the attack was turned against the Razabil "fortress" area. By the end of the month, though Razabil itself still held out, enough of the area had fallen to allow Lieut.-General Christison to withdraw most of his armour, and to press along over the Ngakyedauk Pass against Buthidaung. In the meantime, in order to reach the Kaladan Valley, 81 West African Division had built a jeep track 73 miles long from Chiringa to Daletme: a fine engineering achievement. This track was finished by the middle of January; and by the end of the month the division, which had been concentrated in the Daletme area, began to move southward down the valley. The jeep track was then abandoned; and Troop Carrier Command, which was already dropping supplies to the advancing troops, took over the entire maintenance of the division. Throughout January, good progress was made on both sides of the Mayu Range, and by the beginning of February, 5 Indian Division had captured the whole area, with the exception of the main position.

[1] Pronounced "Nutchidowk" and colloquially known as "Okey doke".

[2] Of the two and a half million men in the Indian Army, the overwhelming majority remained loyal to the Allied cause. Of the 60,000 men of the Indian Army in the notorious Japanese prisoner of war camps, only one-third, some 20,000, were persuaded, or coerced, into joining the so-called "Indian National Army", raised by Subhas Chandra Bose to fight alongside the Japanese. This "Army", which with civilians added to the Indian Army men totalled about 43,000, proved to be of very inferior fighting quality; a fact which was soon realised even by the Japanese.

39. The operations in Arakan had been directly supported by squadrons of 224 Group of the Third Tactical Air Force, which carried out dive-bombing and strafing of the enemy positions before Maungdaw and Buthidaung. During the assault on Razabil, also, bomber squadrons of the Strategic Air Force had joined in the attack on enemy strong-points in the fortress area; but the results were disappointing, for when our troops reached these positions it was found that the air bombardment had inflicted little damage on them. This was chiefly due to the depth of the Japanese dug-outs; and to the steepness of the hill-sides, which enabled the Japanese (who on such occasions displayed their usual tenacity) to survive the bombing and emerge, unless our troops were in a position to follow-up immediately.

40. Over most of Burma, the jungle, which is so thick that it is absolutely proof against air reconnaissance, enabled the enemy to evade our bombing and strafing attacks to a very large extent. The Japanese soldier is adept at camouflage and "digging in"; and he could only be blasted out by extremely accurate pin-point bombing, or else by complete saturation. As the campaign progressed, pilots of the light bombers and fighter-bombers (which were later added to the dive-bombers and Hurricanes) were to gain an intimate knowledge of the country and of the enemy's concealment tactics; and this enabled them to carry out many pin-point attacks which in Europe would probably not have been thought possible.

41. But heavy bombers were less successful in their policy of saturation; because it was seldom possible to put down a sufficiently heavy and accurate concentration. Not only were our resources in heavy bombers small, when compared with the air forces of the European theatre; but greater distances, difficult terrain, and the bad weather which developed over the mountains, combined with a paucity of good targets in the jungle areas to make effective close-support bombing by heavy bombers a very difficult matter indeed. As a result of this, and of our inability (also due to the terrain) to employ tanks and artillery in their usual roles, the operations in Northern Burma were far more an "infantryman's battle" than those in the European theatre.

### (ii) THE CENTRAL FRONT

42. This front covered a large area, including the Naga Hills, Manipur State, the Upper Chindwin Province, and the northern part of the Chin Hills. These areas consist mostly of jungle-covered mountains intersected by narrow valleys with steep sides. The Naga Hills vary in height from 1,000 to 5,000 feet; while the Chin Hills are considerably higher, and average 6,000 feet in the Tiddim area, with peaks of more than 9,000 feet. These mountains and valleys are for the most part covered in dense jungle. The only sizeable flat or low-lying areas are the Kabaw Valley and the Imphal Plain: the former, a disease-ridden tract of thick forest and scrub, the whole of which turns into a swamp during the monsoon. The Imphal Plain, a plateau about 3,000 feet above sea-level, covering about 600 square miles, is comparatively fertile, but is entirely surrounded by jungle-covered hills.

43. Apart from a local few fair-weather roads and tracks, the whole area of the central front was served by the Manipur Road, which runs from Dimapur through Kohima to Imphal. At Imphal the road forks, one branch crossing the hills into Burma via Palel and Tamu, and the other crossing the range much further south via Tiddim.[1] These two forks joined up again in Burma a few miles short of the river town of Kalewa. Jeep tracks to Ukhrul, Shuganu and Silchar also led off from Imphal, which was thus a focal point on the communications.

44. During most of 1943, 4 Corps, under Lieut.-General Scoones, had been carrying out offensive patrols whose scope was being gradually increased; and in October, after the monsoon, small-scale offensive operations were initiated. Here, as on the 15 Corps front, we had gradually obtained mastery in these small-scale engagements, and during the winter the morale and self-confidence of the troops were greatly raised. It was planned to take the offensive early in 1944, in order to secure the boundaries of Bengal and Assam; and our next aim, if the situation was favourable, was to cross to the east of the River Chindwin[2]. These operations were to be on a large scale; so that 4 Corps would engage and pin down enemy forces which would otherwise be used against Lieut.-General Stilwell's Chinese divisions in their advance from the north.[3]

45. General Giffard therefore gave Lieut.-General Slim the following detailed tasks for the Central front:—

(*a*) to clear the Chin Hills as far as the foothills south-east of Tiddim;

(*b*) to dominate the area between the Yu and Chindwin rivers, south of the Tamu–Sittaung road;

[1] See Annexure 3, paragraph 3 (page 243).

[2] See 'B', paragraph 12 (*c*)., and Map 7 (facing page 1).

[3] See 'B', paragraph 12 (*d*).

(*c*) to contain and kill Japanese in the Kabaw Valley and the Atwin Yomas; and
(*d*) to push forces across the Chindwin, if the Long-Range Penetration Brigades of the Special Force created a favourable situation.

46. In November, 1943, the front was being held by three divisions: 20 and 23 Indian Divisions, and 17 Indian Light Division—and the Chin Levies, who were under the operational control of 17 Indian Division. 20 Indian Division, which had just completed its training in India, had its Headquarters at Shenam (about 10 miles south-east of Palel), and was engaged in patrolling across the Chindwin. 23 Indian Division had its Headquarters at Tamu; and 17 Indian Division (consisting of two brigades and three unbrigaded battalions) was based on the Imphal–Tiddim road at Milestone 102. At the end of December, 20 Indian Division was moved forward to the Tamu area to relieve 23 Indian Division; which, having been in the forward area without relief since June, 1942, was now withdrawn into the Imphal Plain for rest and training.

(iii) THE N.C.A.C. FRONT

47. On this front, which comprised that part of Northern Burma which lay north and east of a line Wakching–Taro–Mawlu, my instructions to Lieut.-General Stilwell were to occupy Northern Burma, up to and including the Mogaung–Myitkyina area[1], so as to cover the construction of the overland route to China via Ledo and Myitkyina;[2] and to make the existing air route to China more secure from enemy interference. It was considered that such an advance would be possible only if the main Japanese forces were contained elsewhere, and if we could cut the lines of communication of 18 Japanese Division, opposing Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces. It was consequently decided that Major-General Wingate's Special Force[3] should at the appropriate moment be brought in to cut the enemy road and rail communications to his northern forces, while the main Japanese forces were to be contained by 4 Corps on the Central front.

48. It was also hoped that a further important diversion would be created by the advance of the Chinese Expeditionary Force from Yunnan; and that if the operations went well, it might be possible for the N.C.A.C. forces to link up with the Yunnan armies at Bhamo or Myitkyina. But I never felt confident that the Chinese Expeditionary Force would, in fact, achieve this; and I directed that in our plans for Northern Burma we should not depend on the success of their advance.[4]

49. Soon after the end of the monsoon, I directed Lieut.-General Stilwell to advance; and 22 and 38 Chinese Divisions began to move southwards from Ledo, supported by Troop Carrier Command, and by the Northern Air Sector Force.[5] His first objective was the capture of Shingbwiyang, and the establishment of a bridgehead over the Tanai River; it was then planned to advance to Shaduzup by the middle of February, when 30 Chinese Division would have been added to the force. Emphasis was laid on the necessity for speed, so as to keep well ahead of road construction and allow the work to proceed unhindered by Japanese sorties. By the end of the year Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces had negotiated the difficult Patkai Hills, which divide the valley of the Brahmaputra from the head-waters of the Chindwin, and were established in Shingbwiyang; and with great energy on the part of Brigadier-General Pick and his engineers the road was driven through to the town immediately after its occupation. An airstrip was built to take transport and combat aircraft, which would increasingly be used as the force moved further from its base at Ledo: while in November work had also been begun on the Tinsukia pipe-line, which followed the general line of the road.

50. In February, Lieut.-General Stilwell's main force continued its advance south and south-east of Shingbwiyang; but progress slowed up as the enemy began to offer stiffer resistance. The Hukawng Valley is savage country, covered with dense evergreen forest and thick undergrowth, and 18 Japanese Division, which was a first-class formation, was making full use of its defensive possibilities. Captured documents have shown that the enemy intended to hold the pass which divides the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys until the beginning of the monsoon; but this delaying action was unsuccessful.

51. General Marshall had kept the promise he had made at Quebec,[6] by providing a regiment of three battalions of U.S. infantry for long-range penetration in October. This regiment, 5307 Provisional Infantry Regiment, was given the code name of GALAHAD Force, and had now finished training in penetration

[1] See 'B', paragraph 12 (*d*).
[2] Work on the Ledo Road had been proceeding spasmodically throughout 1943; by the 15th November the road had been surveyed up to 99 miles from Ledo, bulldozers were working at the 79th mile, and 48 miles of metalling had been completed. In December, Brig.-General (later Major-General) Lewis H. Pick arrived and was put in charge of the road construction.
[3] See 'A', paragraphs 4, 5 and 73.
[4] This was a wise precaution, since their immediate participation in the campaign was cancelled in December by the Generalissimo. (See 'B', paragraph 23.)
[5] See Map 9 (facing page 36.)
[6] See 'A', paragraphs 5 and 73.

technique, which it had carried out with Wingate's Special Force in Central India. It had originally been included in Major-General Wingate's main plan, and was to have acted in a long-range penetration role, well to the south of the N.C.A.C. front. But at Lieut.-General Stilwell's request it had been transferred to his direct operational command, and put under Brigadier-General (later Major-General) Frank D. Merrill;[1] and it was now being used in a medium-range penetration role, to assist the advance of the Chinese troops by carrying out hooks and outflanking movements. GALAHAD Force moved first to Ledo, and then down the road; and began their supporting operations in the second half of February.

52. A further addition was made to Lieut.-General Stilwell's command on the 1st February, when the Fort Hertz detachment was put under him for operational purposes. In November, when it had seemed that the Japanese were seriously threatening Fort Hertz, the 4th Battalion of the Burma Regiment had been flown in to stiffen the Kachin Levies; and during the following two or three months these troops, supplied by air, had carried out numerous sorties against the Japanese and gave useful support to Lieut.-General Stilwell's main forces by pinning down and inflicting casualties on enemy troops in the area between Fort Hertz and Sumprabum.

53. Lieut.-General Stilwell's outflanking technique, with his superior numbers aided by large-scale and continuous air support, soon told in his favour; and during February and March the advance forged ahead. The scope of these operations had been greatly reduced, however, by the Generalissimo's decision to refrain from participating: in fact, it was clear that, without a complementary advance by the Yunnan Force, all hope of opening the land route to China during 1944 must be abandoned.

(iv) LONG-RANGE PENETRATION BRIGADES

54. In the last three months of 1943, Major-General Wingate's Special Force had been carrying out its training in Central India. This force contained mostly British troops, with some Gurkhas and West Africans —but no Indians—and was called 3 Indian Division,[2] for cover purposes. It had the bayonet strength of two infantry divisions; and was composed of six brigades: 77[3] and 111 Indian Infantry Brigades; 3 West African Brigade; and 14, 16 and 23 British Infantry Brigades. These last three brigades had formed 70 British Division, which had fought in the Middle East. Its operational reconnaissance regiment and artillery units were now split into three infantry battalions of two columns each; 70 British Division thus ceased to constitute a normal formation. The Special Force was treated as an independent formation, and came under the direct command of Fourteenth Army. Its task would be to penetrate enemy-held country, in order to harry and destroy the enemy on his line of communication with the N.C.A.C. front.

55. Major-General Wingate had been convinced by his former experience behind the Japanese lines that no man should be asked to operate there for more than two or three months at a time. In order to continue operations well into the monsoon, therefore, he had originally planned to introduce his force in two groups, of three brigades each, so that the first could be relieved by the second. The first group was to consist of 16, 77 and 111 Brigades, who had completed their basic training by the beginning of 1944, and were moving up into the Fourteenth Army area ready for operations. At first, it had been intended to commit these three brigades to their operational area by undertaking a long jungle approach march through the Japanese forward positions. But in December No. 1 Air Commando arrived, in accordance with General Arnold's promise to me in Washington, and was given the task of conducting any initial fly-in, and of subsequently providing various forms of support. Now that transport aircraft and gliders had become available, Major-General Wingate proposed to introduce 77 Brigade by air to Paoshan in China, and then westward on foot across the Salween, whilst the remaining brigades would go on foot.

56. This plan was modified in January, when it was discovered that the enemy was guarding every major crossing-place on the Chindwin. It was thought that this was in anticipation of a second Wingate expedition; but it later became clear that it had been a part of preparations for a general offensive. For the time being, however, the Chindwin route was considered impracticable. Feeling that, if the additional aircraft necessary for flying-in the whole force direct into Central Burma could be provided, this would not only save the men the exhaustion of the march and the river crossing, but would leave them longer for the actual operations, I told Major-General Wingate to work out a plan for this with Lieut.-General Slim and Major-General Stratemeyer. It was found that

[1] The force became colloquially known as "Merrill's Marauders".

[2] Wingate's men were colloquially called "Chindits", from their shoulder-flash depicting a "chinthe"—the guardian lion of Burmese temples.

[3] This formation had carried out the 1943 Wingate expedition. It was now completely re-formed with new units, and the handful of officers and men still available from the previous expedition were distributed through the six brigades.

sufficient aircraft resources could be made available to lift two brigades by air into their operational areas early in March; and two more later in the month—which would mean that only two of them (which would be supplied by air) would have to march in.[1]

57. Troop Carrier Command, working in conjunction with No. 1 Air Commando, was to be responsible for flying-in the main body of the force and subsequently maintaining it in the field, and Strategic Air Force was to give indirect support, by bombing enemy communications and concentrations during critical periods. 221 Group of Third Tactical Air Force was to help as far as its other commitments allowed; but its support was bound to be limited, since it was not yet equipped with long-range fighters and was consequently unable to afford adequate air cover so far from its base. Major-General Stratemeyer, foreseeing that the general direction of air operations would be complicated by the variety of the commands involved, appointed Air Marshal Baldwin as his representative to co-ordinate all air operations.

58. Major-General Wingate now considered it a necessary part of his plan that each brigade operating behind the Japanese lines should establish a stronghold within its operational area, as soon as the situation allowed, into which it could retire for rest and refit during prolonged operations. Each stronghold was to have a fair-weather Dakota airstrip; and it would be sited well away from any land line of communication, so that no enemy threat to it could be developed to an extent where it could not be neutralised by the stronghold garrison and by the mobile troops operating round it. The interior defences of the stronghold were to be garrisoned by infantry battalions supported by field and anti-aircraft artillery. 3 West African Brigade was reorganised by battalions for this purpose; and he was also allotted one field and one anti-aircraft battery, and an extra battalion of infantry, by Fourteenth Army.

59. On the 4th February, in accordance with my overall directives for the conduct of the campaign, Lieut.-General Slim and Major-General Stratemeyer issued joint instructions to Major-General Wingate and Colonel Cochrane, U.S.A.A.F., giving them three tasks in the following order of importance:—

(*a*) to help the advance of Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces to the Myitkyina area by drawing off and disorganising the enemy forces opposing them, and preventing the reinforcement and supply of these enemy forces;

(*b*) to create a favourable situation for the Chinese Expeditionary Force to advance westwards from Yunnan across the Salween;[2] and

(*c*) to inflict the maximum confusion, damage and loss, on the enemy forces in Northern Burma.

The operation began on the 5th February, when 16 Brigade set out on foot with their mules[3] from Ledo, with orders to proceed southwards across the Chindwin south-west of Taro and on via Lonkin to Rail Indaw, to take part in the main operation of the force.[4]

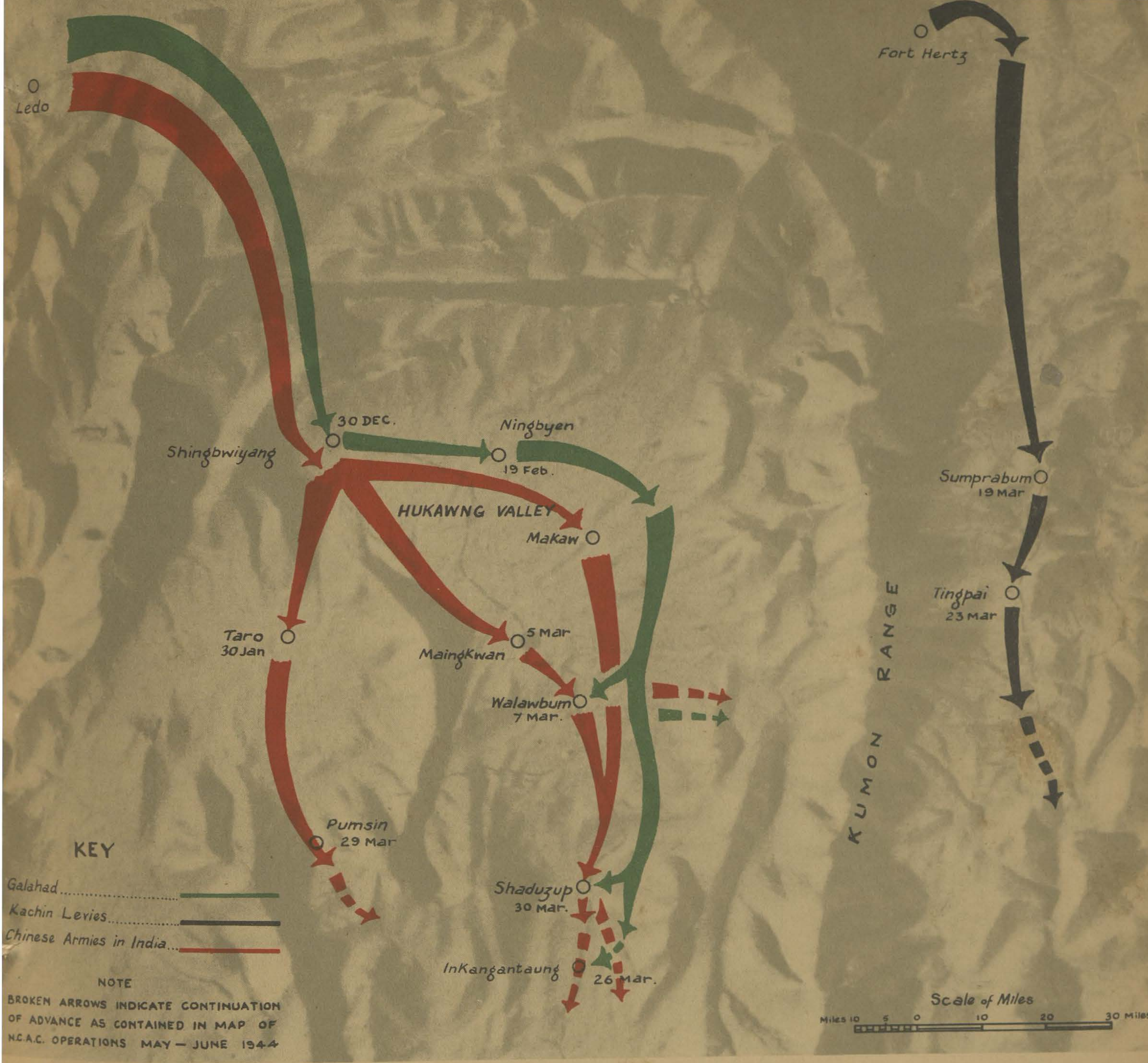
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[1] One of these, 23 Brigade, was turned over to 33 Corps for use in a medium-range penetration role. (See 'B', paragraph 115.).

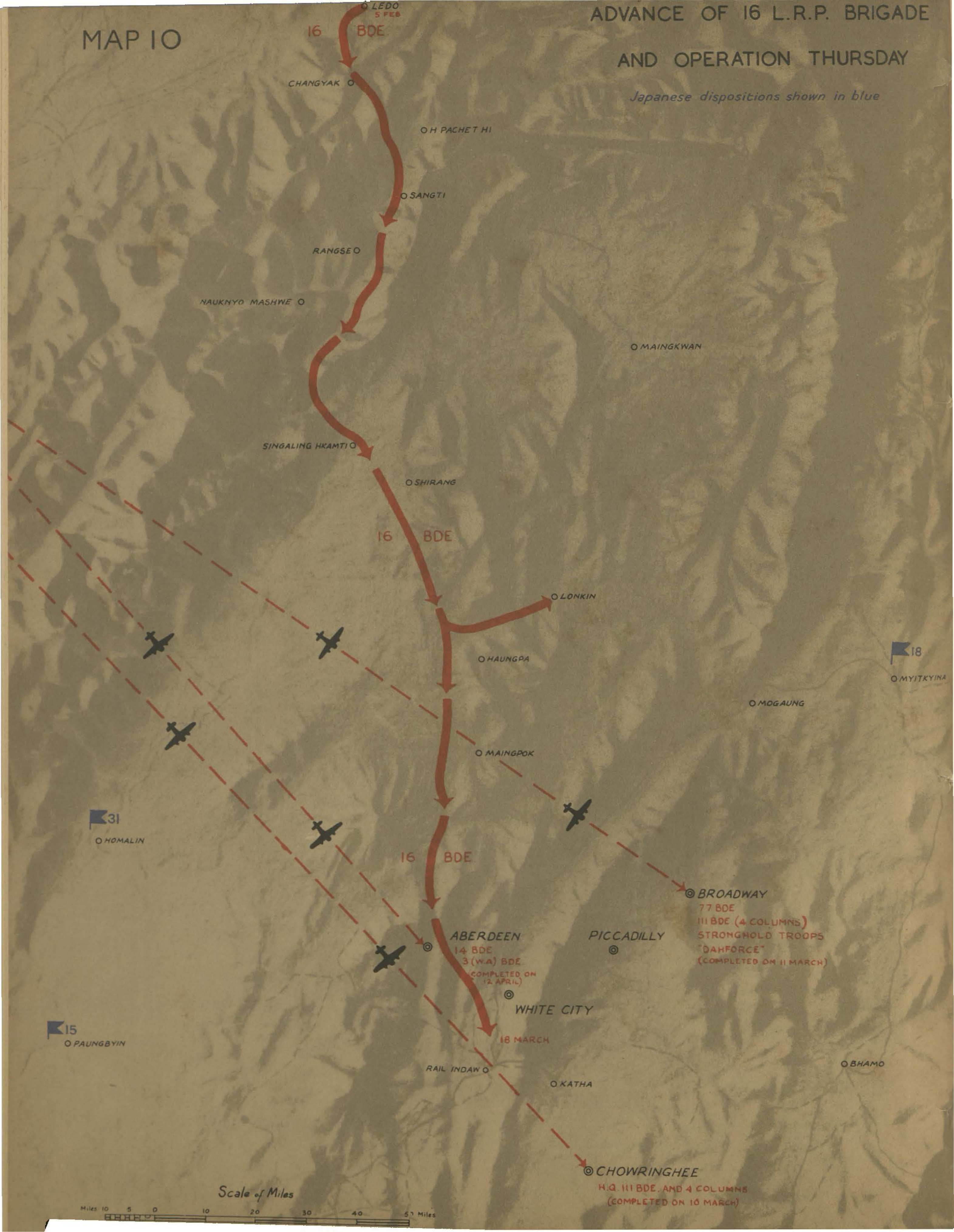
[2] In the hope of inducing the Generalissimo to change his mind about allowing this force to advance.

[3] So that they should not betray our presence to the enemy the mules were subjected to an operation which rendered them mute.

[4] See Map 10 (facing page 37).




# MAP 9. N.C.A.C. OPERATIONS
## NOVEMBER 1943 — MARCH 1944


MAP 10
ADVANCE OF 16 L.R.P. BRIGADE
AND OPERATION THURSDAY
Japanese dispositions shown in blue
LEDO
5 FEB
16 BDE
CHANGYAK
H PACHET HI
SANGTI
RANGSE
NAUKNYO MASHWE
MAINGKWAN
SINGALING HKAMTI
SHIRANG
16 BDE
LONKIN
HAUNGPA
18
MYITKYINA
MOGAUNG
MAINGPOK
31
HOMALIN
16 BDE
BROADWAY
77 BDE
111 BDE (4 COLUMNS)
STRONGHOLD TROOPS
"DAHFORCE"
(COMPLETED ON 11 MARCH)
ABERDEEN
14 BDE
3 (W.A) BDE
(COMPLETED ON 12 APRIL)
PICCADILLY
WHITE CITY
18 MARCH
15
PAUNGBYIN
RAIL INDAW
KATHA
BHAMO
CHOWRINGHEE
H.Q. 111 BDE. AND 4 COLUMNS
(COMPLETED ON 10 MARCH)
Scale of Miles
Miles 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles

# SYNOPSIS

# B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

## SECTION TWO: FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1944

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*Page* 39

Japanese attempt to invade India in two phases:—

*Phase* 1, *the battle of Arakan*

Tanahashi Force strikes; 7 Indian Division is encircled; The battle for the "Admin. Box"; Administrative miscalculation by the Japanese; 7 Indian Division breaks out; Air superiority established; 81 West African Division advances in the Kaladan Valley.

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*Page* 44

*Phase* 2, *the battles of the Imphal Plain and Kohima*

The enemy crosses the Chindwin; 33 Corps reinforces Fourteenth Army; 5 Indian Division is flown in from Arakan; The enemy invests Kohima; The Kohima–Imphal road cut; 7 Indian Division is flown in from Arakan; 4 Corps encircled; The enemy closes in on Imphal; Kohima relieved.

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*Page* 49

Fly-in of the Long-Range Penetration Brigades (Operation THURSDAY); Major-General Wingate killed.

✲

The framework of our seven related operations had been destroyed piecemeal; and our offensive during the winter months had consequently been on such a small scale that it had been virtually confined to Lieut.-General Stilwell's operations for the opening of the land route to China. But although 15 Corps had begun their overland advance with no prospect of being able to capture Akyab,[1] and 4 Corps had contented itself with trying to dispose itself favourably for an eventual crossing of the Chindwin, in both cases they had aimed at containing the major part of the Japanese forces on their respective fronts—so as to leave the minimum opposition to the N.C.A.C. advance. Apart from this, our general aim could only be to bring the Japanese forces to battle, wherever this could be done to our best advantage.

61. The Japanese High Command played into our hands, at this point, by staging an all-out offensive: first in Arakan, and then on the Central front. This had the double advantage of drawing the enemy forces in the direction we wished, at an earlier stage than an advance by 4 Corps could have done, and of drawing them away from the N.C.A.C. front in far greater numbers than 4 Corps would have managed to do. It was most fortunate that at this stage the enemy should choose to fight us on our own ground, near our own bases: in the only areas where our existing lines of communication could adequately support us in a large-scale campaign, and where our air bases were sufficiently near the front to enable air-supply to be undertaken, if necessary, with the very few transport aircraft we had. The enemy, on the other hand, was fighting with no safe line of communication behind him; and was many miles from his bases. But although our hopes and prospects were considerably raised by this Japanese offensive, the situation was at times to prove extremely dangerous for us.

62. The invasion plan, known to the Japanese High Command as Operation "C", was a Grand Design. It is now known that at the end of 1942 the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters had already begun to consider a thrust into India; that the plan had begun to develop, at Burma Area Army level, by the middle of 1943; and at Army level in September, 1943. In January, 1944, Imperial General Headquarters had finally authorised detailed planning to proceed. The invasion of India was to be achieved by splitting open the British-Indian front, sealing off the eastern from the western half, and cutting the lines of communication of both. Each sector was then to be destroyed separately; and the roads through Chittagong and Dimapur laid open to the Japanese Army—at which stage the enemy hoped to incite a general uprising in Bengal.

63. In Phase 1, on the Arakan front, the port of Chittagong was to be seized; and Lieut.-General Slim's reserves were to be drawn off and kept fully committed in Arakan before Phase 2 began. In Phase 2, which was timed to begin on the Central front about one month after Phase 1, the objectives were:—

(*a*) to capture our bases at Imphal and Dimapur, and so to forestall our own offensive;

(*b*) to maintain pressure on North-East India and, if possible, to cut the Assam line of communication, on which supply to China depended; and

(*c*) to exercise political influence over India—and in particular, to install Subhas Chandra Bose[2] as head of a puppet government in conquered Indian territory.

64. In making their plans for this overall offensive, the enemy assumed that our available reserves would already have been committed to meet their offensive in Arakan before Phase 2 was launched. He did not appreciate the fact that his advantage in interior land and water lines of communication could be counterbalanced by our use of air transport. Moreover, as a corollary of this, he failed to realise that, when he had cut our lines of communication, our troops would no longer be forced to fall back and fight a battle to re-establish these lines—for with air-supply at their disposal they would be able to "stay put". The technique which in more than two years had not failed the Japanese in Malaya or Burma was therefore to be used again, both in Arakan and on the Central front. Outflanking forces were to march through jungle so thick that it could not be permanently held by our forces; and where there was every chance that their advance would not be discovered by our forward

[1] Since Akyab was an island and our amphibious forces had been withdrawn.

[2] Leader of the Indian National Army.

patrols, or by our reconnaissance aircraft. The enemy had good reason to expect that they would achieve surprise; and to a great extent this happened in Arakan, though less so on the Central front.

65. The Japanese, themselves, would of course be equally hampered by the difficulty of the country in bringing up adequate supplies. But the essence of their plan was that their outflanking troops should capture supply dumps behind our front-line troops; and for this purpose they had organised units expressly for dealing with captured equipment and transport. In particular, they counted on the early capture of our bases at Imphal and Dimapur. from which they hoped to obtain supplies for their further offensive into India.

PHASE 1

66. By January, Japanese army forces in Burma had been increased from one army of five divisions (a total of about 135,000 men), when the South-East Asia Command was formed, to two armies of eight divisions and one independent mixed brigade (a total of some 200,000). It seemed likely that an offensive was contemplated; and there were signs that a thrust against 4 Corps was being prepared. It also appeared, from various items of Intelligence obtained towards the end of January, that a counter-stroke against the 15 Corps advance was being planned. For in Arakan it was discovered that 112 Japanese Regiment, commanded by Colonel Tanahashi,[1] had been withdrawn to reserve—which might well indicate that some individual exploit was being prepared. Elements of a new regiment were detected in the enemy's front line facing 15 Corps; while it was learned from captured documents that a detachment of the Indian National Army had been ordered to concentrate east of the Mayu Range.

67. At the beginning of February, 15 Corps was still holding the Mayu Peninsula as far south as (but not including) the Maungdaw–Buthidaung "Tunnels" road.[2] 5 Indian Division was west of the Mayu Range, holding Maungdaw and part of Razabil at the western end of the tunnels; while 7 Indian Division was east of the range and in touch with 5 Indian Division via the Ngakyedauk Pass. Along the remainder of the tunnels road and to the south of it, was 55 Japanese Division, with elements of another Japanese division and of the Indian National Army. The task of these forces, which were controlled by the newly-raised Twenty-eighth Japanese Army Headquarters,[3] was to check the southward advance of 15 Corps and to divert its attention and strength from the Central front.

68. We discovered later that Lieut.-General Hanaya had re-organised his 55 Japanese Division, and elements of the Indian National Army, into three Task Forces,[4] for the initial action. The leading Task Force (Tanahashi Force) of four battalions whose backbone was 112 Japanese Regiment, was to carry out the main encirclement. Its orders were to move up between the eastern flank of 7 Indian Division and the western flank of 81 West African Division, take Taung Bazaar from the rear, sweep round it, and cut the Ngakyedauk Pass, trapping 7 Indian Division on the eastern side of the Mayu Range. Kubo Force, which was of battalion strength, was to follow a parallel route as far as Goppe Bazaar, and then push over the Goppe Pass and down the western slope of the Mayu Range. It was hoped to cut the communications of the whole of 15 Corps by cutting the coastal road from the north at the village of Maunghnama. Doi Force, a holding group of at least two battalions, would meanwhile attack from the Maungdaw–Buthidaung line.

69. Maximum air support was to be given for about seven days; after which it was expected that the outflanking forces would divide 5 and 7 Indian Divisions and cut them off from 15 Corps Headquarters and their main line of supply. At this point, 7 Indian Division was to be cut to pieces while trying to escape across the Mayu Range; the three Japanese Task Forces would then combine to crush 5 Indian Division, isolated from all reinforcements from the north by the Kubo Force road-block at Maunghnama. The Japanese assumed that 5 Indian Division would be able to move only in one direction, westward across the Naaf River—and Japanese maps, captured later, even showed its shattered remnants trying to escape by boat in a minor Dunkirk.

70. General Giffard, and Lieut.-Generals Slim and Christison, concluding that a Japanese offensive was imminent, correctly forecast that it would be launched along the east side of the Kalapanzin Valley, with the object of cutting off our main forces in that area. Before the enemy's intentions became evident, Lieut.-General Christison had intended that 5 Indian Division should take over part of 7 Indian Division's front, freeing this division for operations against Buthidaung; and the transfer of 9 Brigade of 5 Indian Division from west to east of the Range had already begun. To strengthen the attack on Buthidaung, he had also

[1] A resourceful and aggressive commander who had gained an important tactical success against us in the Kalapanzin Valley in 1943.

[2] See Map 11 (facing page 44).

[3] Under the command of Lieut.-General Sakurai.

[4] Under the general command of Major-General Sakurai his Divisional Infantry Commander—not to be confused with the Army Commander of the same name.

detached the greater part of a tank regiment and a regiment of medium artillery from the force attacking Razabil, and had ordered them to move into 7 Indian Division area by way of the Ngakyedauk Pass—where only a few days before the jeep track had been developed into a military road. The armoured regiment's reserve tanks, however, had remained west of the range, so that the enemy should think that the whole regiment was still committed against Razabil.

71. As soon as it became clear, however, that the Japanese were about to launch a counter-offensive, a brigade of 7 Indian Division and the tank regiment were withdrawn northwards and held in mobile reserve, while a brigade of 5 Indian Division was ordered to occupy part of the Mayu Range. 5 and 7 Indian Divisions were told to prepare for all-round defence. All formations and units were ordered to hold their ground and told that, if they were cut off by Japanese infiltration, they would be supplied by air. In order to serve the offensive on the east side of the Mayu Range, Lieut.-General Christison had already set up the Corps forward maintenance area at Sinzweya, at the eastern foot of the Ngakyedauk Pass and about four miles south-west of 7 Division Headquarters.

72. Though this "Admin. Box" had been laid out for offensive purposes, it had been organised to resist interference (up to a large-scale raid); it was now re-organised with its own defence commander and signals, and ordered to prepare to withstand an attack by a force of anything up to one battalion. Several days' rations, together with ammunition and medical supplies for a whole division, were packed ready for dropping and stored on adjacent airfields; while squadrons of Troop Carrier Command and Third Tactical Air Force were ordered to stand by.

73. In the early morning of the 4th February, Colonel Tanahashi struck; and in a few hours the face of the campaign was changed. Tanahashi and Kubo Forces succeeded with considerable skill in evading our tactical air reconnaissance; and passed through the dense jungle on the eastern flank of 7 Indian Division without our knowledge. On the same day, they captured Taung Bazaar; while at the same time strong frontal attacks were made by Doi Force against the positions of 7 Indian Division north and north-west of Buthidaung. The outflanking forces then turned south and west; Tanahashi Force to cut the Ngakyedauk Pass, and Kubo Force to cut the Bawli Bazaar–Razabil road. So far, the Japanese attack was going according to plan. We had been prepared for a frontal or flank counter-offensive; but we were surprised that the enemy's blow should be an encircling movement.

74. When the attack opened, Lieut.-General Slim ordered 26 Indian Division, which was in Fourteenth Army reserve at Comilla, to rejoin 15 Corps. Two brigades were moved to Bawli Bazaar where they were ordered to form the left pincer of a movement to crush Tanahashi Force against 7 Indian Division. 26 Indian Division moved over the Goppe Pass into the head of the Kalapanzin Valley. Its place was taken by 36 British Division, which had arrived at Chittagong to take part in operation PIGSTICK—now cancelled. (The division was put at Lieut.-General Slim's disposal; but as it had been specially trained for amphibious operations, it was to be used only as a longstop, and if possible not offensively). The tanks, which had been taken into reserve, together with a brigade of 7 Indian Division, were immediately committed against the outflanking forces that were now turning south against 7 Indian Division's main position.

75. The enemy managed, however, to circumvent this attempt to hold him up; and at dawn on the 6th February over-ran the Headquarters of 7 Indian Division. The divisional commander, Major-General F. W. (later Lieutenant-General Sir Frank) Messervy, had had previous experience, in North Africa, of having his divisional Headquarters over-run by the enemy. He now succeeded in fighting his way out, with part of his staff; and re-established his Headquarters the same evening in the Corps Admin. Box at Sinzweya.

76. This contained all the Corps troops assembled for the offensive against Buthidaung, the Divisional troops of 7 Indian Division, and other heterogeneous elements. The three brigades of 7 Indian Division, and the brigade of 5 Indian Division under its command, had dug in on their positions and formed similar boxes. But a serious attack in the Admin. Box area now developed; and Major-General Messervy, who had assumed overall command in the area, decided to bring in all infantry from outlying positions, for use as counter-attack troops. On the 10th February, Tanahashi Force cut the Ngakyedauk Pass, and made contact with elements of Doi Force to the south. The troops in the Admin. Box were now completely encircled and had to be entirely supplied by air.

77. Kubo Force was driving north to the Goppe Pass, fighting against 26 Indian Division. They did not reach Goppe: for a mile or so short of it, they ran into 18 Indian Mule Company; and it was typical of the new spirit that the muleteers stood their ground and fought like crack troops. Believing that the Goppe Pass must be strongly held, and that it was urgent that the coastal road should be cut, Kubo Force Commander ordered the storming of the precipitous range

between Goppe and Ngakyedauk. By astonishing efforts, the Japanese soldiers hauled their guns up the 1,000-foot cliffside, across the Range, and lowered them down the other side. They then burst through a concentration of British rear echelons on the western slope, where they were again challenged; but they drove on and reached the road, where they blew up bridges, set fire to dumps, waylaid convoys, and finally established themselves in the jungle nearby, from where they interfered with (but did not succeed in cutting) communications between 5 Indian Division and the north. In the end these raiders had to be liquidated to the last man. They interfered with communications less than they had hoped, however, for much of the supply of 5 Division had continued to flow in by sea.

78. The air transport situation was beginning to become difficult. Air supply would now be necessary, not only for increasing the rate of build-up of 26 Indian Division,[1] whose task it would be to restore communications between 7 Indian Division and the north, but also for continuing supply to the beleaguered 7 Indian Division itself; while the fly-in of the Long-Range Penetration brigades was soon to begin.[2] Since our existing resources in transport aircraft were unable to keep pace with the demands of the campaign on this front, as well as in other parts of Burma, I was forced to ask the permission of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to divert aircraft from the Hump route for the period during which the continued supply of 7 Indian Division would overlap with the practice flights and actual fly-in of Major-General Wingate's Special Force. This permission was granted; and 25 Commandos (C-46) were put at our disposal in Arakan from the third week in February till the middle of March.

79. The enemy's air effort was on a greater scale than ever before: a sweep of 100 aircraft went out on the first day that our troops were cut off; and there were sweeps of more than 60 on the following days. Our great anxiety was to maintain air superiority over the actual battle front, for without this it would not be possible to carry out supply-dropping. The air battle was fought by the three forward squadrons of Spitfires, for which Hurricanes provided airfield cover while they refuelled and re-armed. The Japanese countered our newly arrived Spitfires with a new fighter of their own, the Tojo, whose manoeuvrability offset to some extent the advantages in speed which our Spitfires enjoyed. Nevertheless, we took very heavy toll of these and retained our air superiority. During the first 13 days of the battle, 65 Japanese aircraft were destroyed, probably destroyed, and damaged—for the loss of only three Spitfires.

80. Our air-supply never relaxed; but it was vital that losses and damage to transport aircraft should be kept to an absolute minimum; since even a small reduction in our strength would have prejudiced the success of other operations. And since air-supply is only an economic proposition where air preponderance is unquestioned, we could not have afforded to continue supplying our encircled troops—a task already made difficult enough by anti-aircraft fire—if these air battles had not been completely successful. Soon, for protection against attack from the air, and against light anti-aircraft and small arms fire from the ground, most of the dropping had to be done by night.

81. Realising that they would fail in their objective unless they succeeded in reducing the defended positions of 7 Indian Division, the enemy decided to stake all available troops in a full-out assault. With the exception of the cavalry regiment of 55 Japanese Division (which was in the Kaladan Valley), the whole of the original Arakan Force (including divisional troops thrown in to fight as infantry), was committed; while the bulk of 54 Japanese Division was moved up to Akyab and Lower Kaladan—where it remained as a potential source of reinforcement, or to exploit success. But in spite of ferocious attacks, backed by heavy artillery and strong air support, the enemy made no substantial headway. His staying power was now beginning to break; he was seriously short of food and ammunition; and having sustained severe casualties, he was demoralised by an entirely unexpected reverse for which his plans had made no provision.

82. In point of fact, he was faced with the complete breakdown of his administrative system. For the whole operation was based on the assumption that he would be able to bring about the wholesale retirement of our forces by infiltration and outflanking movements—as in the past; and since Major-General Sakurai expected to be in Chittagong within a week, and to have captured British supplies and transport on the way, he had brought only ten days' supplies of food and ammunition. This miscalculation was the undoing of the Japanese. Our units had all been ordered to stand firm; and they did so.

83. Throughout the battle, the enemy's supply lines had been harried from the sea and from the air, so that his attempts to remedy the situation, after the initial plan had failed, were unsuccessful. Owing to the

[1] Which otherwise had to rely for its maintenance on the single mule track over the Goppe Pass.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 118.

poor state of the Arakan roads he had to bring in most of his supplies by coastal craft and inland water transport, which were shot up by our aircraft and destroyed by our light naval forces. In addition to this, our air superiority made it very difficult for him to carry out the concentration and day movement of troops and supplies, which he needed to maintain him during and after his offensive; and by the second week in February he had begun to run short of food.

84. 7 Indian Division, on the other hand, was being entirely supplied by air. In spite of severe ground and air opposition, our pilots continued with great courage and skill to maintain this supply, losing only one Dakota (C-47) in the process. Not only basic supplies were dropped, but also the new "SEAC" newspaper, cigarettes, and mail from home; and it was afterwards found that by sending these amenities we had been able to make the troops realise that though temporarily encircled they were at no time isolated. The defence of the Sinzweya Admin. Box is a measure of the fighting qualities of the British and Indian soldier. Not only did 7 Indian Division and 9 Brigade of 5 Indian Division prove, in this first crucial test, that morale had been re-established in South-East Asia; but administrative units who had had no battle experience took their place with the fighting troops, and played their part in wearing down the enemy's desperate attacks.

85. Two days after their encirclement, 7 Indian Division had been ordered to block all tracks and prevent infiltration by the enemy; and to contain the Japanese in the Admin. Box area, until they could be destroyed by 5 Indian Division—in conjunction with 26 Indian Division, which had taken Taung Bazaar on the 10th,[1] and was now making steady progress south. During the third week of February, the battle was definitely turning in our favour; and on the 23rd, 55 Japanese Division began to withdraw. Detachments of 7 Indian Division, which had been preparing its counter-offensive during its encirclement, now broke out over the Ngakyedauk Pass and made contact with detachments of 5 Indian Division next day.

86. In his efforts to escape, the enemy broke up into small parties which were hunted down in the jungle. The area south of Bawli Bazaar was cleared only after very heavy fighting, but in the course of the battle an enemy battalion group was almost entirely wiped out; while many Japanese were trapped east of the Pass, and were mopped up by 7 and 26 Indian Divisions. It took some time to clear the enemy from this thick, hilly jungle; but in spite of this, and although the Pass was only finally opened on the 29th February, 15 Corps was able to resume its general offensive on the 5th March. The first objective was the capture of the Maungdaw–Buthidaung road; and of the mouth of the Naaf river—which would enable supplies brought in by sea at Maungdaw and Teknaaf to be moved along the road to our forces.

87. The advance made slow headway. The Japanese had brought up strong reinforcements and were resisting fiercely; while our air-supply, as well as our land lines of communication, were strained to the utmost. Another limiting factor was the state of the Arakan road, which was in very bad condition and difficult to improve owing to the almost complete absence of local stone. The Army improvised with a surface of bricks, made and baked on the spot with coal-dust imported from India. But this surface, despite constant maintenance, was only just able to stand up to heavy traffic; and as every effort had to be made to relieve congestion on the road, considerable use was made of coastal shipping and inland water transport. Here there was also a bottle-neck, for the ports used—Cox's Bazaar, Ultakhali and Maungdaw—were quite inadequate and needed to be developed.

88. On the 11th March our first success came, east of the Range, with the capture of Buthidaung by 7 Indian Division, followed by an attack on hill positions south and west of the town. West of the Range, the whole of the Razabil area was in the hands of 5 Indian Division by the 12th March; and at the end of the month, 36 British Division (no longer restricted to the defensive role which had been imposed on it in February) captured the tunnels on the Maungdaw–Buthidaung road. The road itself, however, was not completely taken; but was invested by our forces east and west of the Range.

89. Throughout the battle of Arakan, 81 West African Division, supplied from the air, had been operating in the Kaladan valley, to contain elements of 55 Japanese Division which might have contributed to the threat to our left flank, or been otherwise used against us on the Arakan front. In February, the West Africans had advanced south down the valley; and at the beginning of March they had captured Kyauktaw and Apaukwa in quick succession. At that stage the enemy (presumably with the object of liquidating 81 West African Division and threatening our left flank) had brought up elements of 54 Japanese Division and counter-attacked in force; the division had therefore been compelled to retire to a position north-west of Kyauktaw, where it resumed its role of

[1] An airstrip was at once improvised from which the division's casualties were evacuated.

flank protection.[1] On the 23rd March, we captured the outer ring of the Kyaukit defences. The enemy left behind much equipment; but on the 28th, after fighting back hard, he succeeded in infiltrating a force of about 400 into the hills east of the old Admin. Box area at Sinzweya. This was, however, mopped up.

90. Air effort was now being gradually switched from the Arakan to the Central and N.C.A.C. fronts; for although air-supply was to continue in Arakan throughout the campaign, it ceased to be urgent after the defeat of the Japanese offensive there. In the first half of March the effort of the Third Tactical Air Force had been evenly divided between the fronts; but in the second half of the month, its main strength was concentrated on the 4 Corps front, while sorties were also flown deep into enemy territory to help Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces and the Special Force. Towards the end of the month, 25 Indian Division was brought into Arakan to replace 5 Indian Division, which it had been decided to transfer to the Central front, where a serious situation was developing.[2]

91. Though the enemy left more than 5,000 dead on the battlefields during the month of February alone, the scope of the battle of Arakan was a limited one; and it is by its effect on morale that its significance must be judged. This was the first real battle since the formation of the Command, and much of the remarkable increase in morale that had taken place would have been lost if it had gone in the enemy's favour. Well organised, well supplied and protected by air, supported by naval coastal forces,[3] and assured of reinforcements, our troops had proved themselves able not only to stand their ground, but eventually to take the offensive against an enemy of whom they were now able to take the measure for the first time.

92. 15 Corps and 224 Group, with Troop Carrier Command, had been confident of victory. This was due, in part, to the preliminary training and re-organisation which had been carried out in India during 1943 under General Auchinleck by General Giffard, Air Chief Marshal Peirse, and their commanders; also, in part, to the timely preparations which had been made. But mainly it was the fact that we were able to supply the troops by air, as they had been promised, which had given them the certainty that they would eventually be reinforced, and that the tide would turn in their favour. The battle of Arakan marked the turning-point in our campaign in Burma, and set the pace for the battles that were shortly to follow on the Central front: where greater numbers, greater distances, and a much longer period of time were involved. For in this battle, what was virtually a new technique in warfare had been evolved, tried out, and vindicated; and the myth of the "Invincible Jap" was now exploded.

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### PHASE 2

93. A month after the enemy had launched Phase 1 of his Grand Design, he set in motion Phase 2: an offensive on the Central front, on three times the scale of that in Arakan. As early as the end of January, evidence of the enemy's offensive intentions had begun to accumulate. Air reconnaissance had reported troop movements, road-building, and raft construction at various points along the Chindwin; and land patrols had succeeded for the first time in obtaining definite identification of 15 Japanese Division on this front. In order to meet the threatened attack, the Commanders decided to concentrate 4 Corps in the Imphal area; and to fight the decisive battle there in conjunction with 221 Group.

94. Imphal, on the main land line of communication between India and Burma, was strategically important as the advanced base for the maintenance and operation of our land and air forces on the Central front.[4] It was also the nodal point on which hinged the defence of Assam, and was vital to any force invading Burma from India, or *vice-versa.* With the Imphal Plain in their hands (which would provide an excellent advanced base as well as sites for the construction of forward airfields), the Japanese would be able not only to attack our bases and airfields in the Surma Valley; but also to interrupt the vital Assam line of communication, on which Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces and the air-ferry route over the Hump depended.

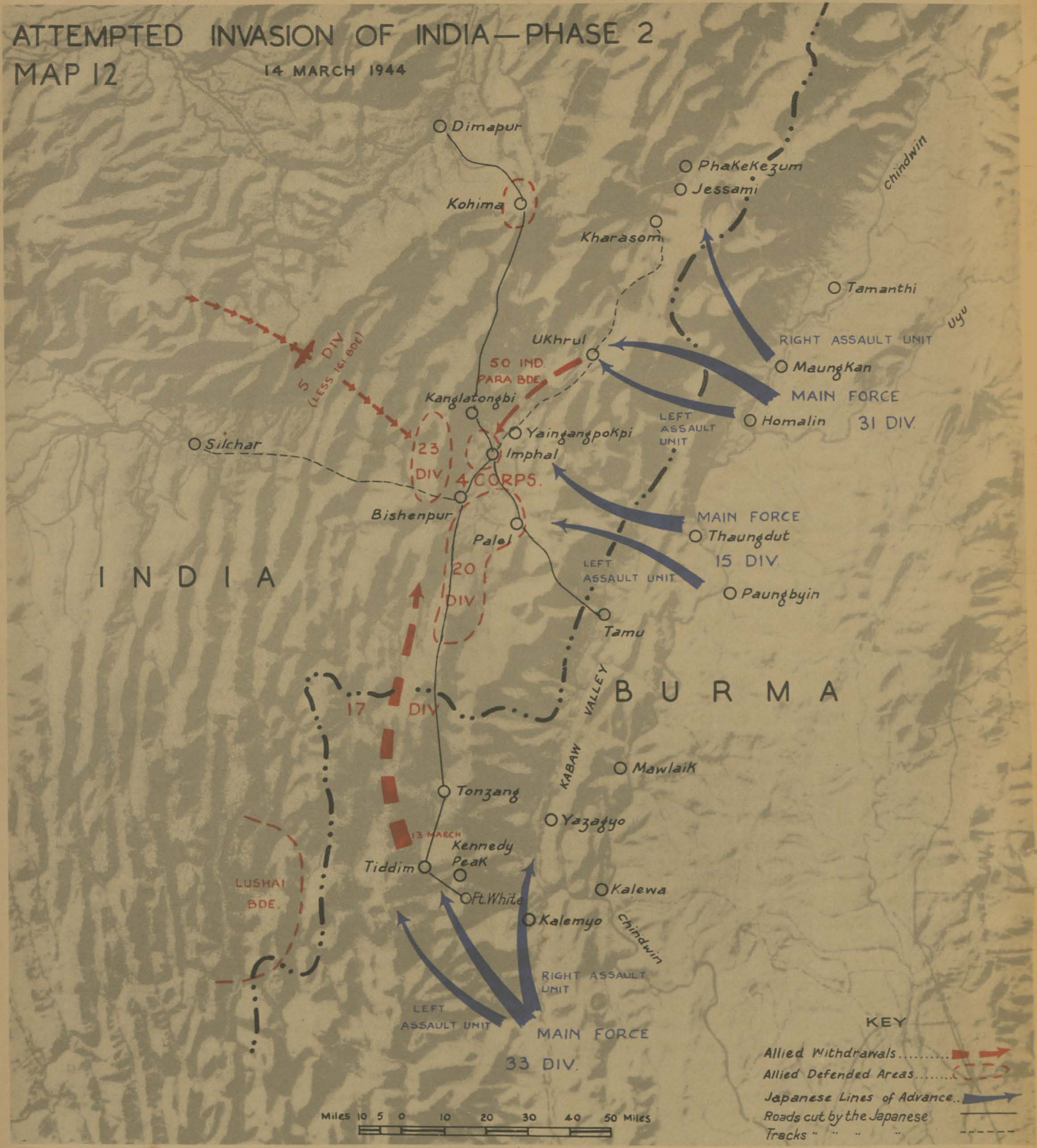
95. Our plan was based on the assumption that the Japanese attack would begin about the 15th March, and that it would take the form of:—

(*a*) an advance from the Fort White area (which the enemy had captured in November, 1943) in an attempt to cut off 17 Indian Division in the Tiddim area, followed by an advance northward

[1] This reverse temporarily lowered the morale of the division; and for some time it was not used for serious offensive action.
[2] See 'B', paragraph 98.
[3] On the 9th February Lieut.-General Slim had asked that the Navy should undertake diversionary attacks against enemy positions in the area of Taungup and Ramree Island. Coastal forces of the Royal Navy, the Royal Indian Navy, the Burma R.N.V.R. and the South African Naval Forces had carried these out in co-operation with 15 Corps and the air force. But although they interfered considerably with his communications and slowed down the arrival of supplies and reinforcements, these attacks had not deflected the enemy from his main offensive.
[4] See 'B', paragraphs 42 and 43.

# ATTEMPTED INVASION OF INDIA —— PHASE I
## MAP II
4–7 FEBRUARY 1944




ATTEMPTED INVASION OF INDIA—PHASE 2
MAP 12
14 MARCH 1944
Dimapur
Kohima
PhaKeKezum
Jessami
Kharasom
Chindwin
Tamanthi
Uyu
RIGHT ASSAULT UNIT
MaungKan
MAIN FORCE
Homalin
31 DIV.
LEFT ASSAULT UNIT
UKhrul
50 IND. PARA BDE.
5 DIV (LESS 161 BDE)
Kanglatongbi
Yaingangpokpi
Imphal
Silchar
23 DIV.
4 CORPS.
Bishenpur
Palel
MAIN FORCE
Thaungdut
15 DIV.
LEFT ASSAULT UNIT
Paungbyin
INDIA
20 DIV.
Tamu
KABAW VALLEY
BURMA
17 DIV.
Mawlaik
Tonzang
Yazagyo
13 MARCH
Kennedy Peak
Tiddim
LUSHAI BDE.
Ft. White
Kalewa
Kalemyo
Chindwin
RIGHT ASSAULT UNIT
LEFT ASSAULT UNIT
MAIN FORCE
33 DIV.
Miles 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles
KEY
Allied Withdrawals
Allied Defended Areas
Japanese Lines of Advance
Roads cut by the Japanese
Tracks

on Imphal and by an outflanking move across the track from Imphal to Silchar via Bishenpur;

(*b*) a thrust at the Imphal Plain by a force coming up from Tamu and on up the Palel road;

(*c*) an advance on Ukhrul, to the north of Imphal, by another force crossing the Chindwin; and

(*d*) a strike at Kohima, further north, to cut the Dimapur–Imphal road as a prelude to attacking Dimapur itself. Owing to the difficult country and the lack of communications between the Chindwin and Kohima itself, however, it was not thought that this last thrust would be made by more than one regiment (the equivalent of a British brigade).

96. Our plan took into account, but could not remedy, a serious tactical weakness: the fact that for 300 miles the Dimapur–Kohima–Imphal–Tiddim road, as well as the Imphal–Tamu road, ran parallel to the enemy's front; and with 4 Corps based on the Imphal Plain we had to stand the risk of these roads being cut (as the former actually was). Fortunately, we were able, for the first time, to fight the Japanese in a situation where they also had precarious communications behind them; we were also fighting them on ground of our own choosing, where we had the best chance of fighting a decisive battle which would destroy the Fifteenth Japanese Army and prepare the way for our own offensive.

97. On the 5th March, I asked General Giffard and Air Chief Marshal Peirse to report as soon as possible on the general position on the Central front, and in particular on the details of their reinforcement programme; for I had for some time been concerned with the rate of the Japanese build-up. On the 6th I left Delhi to visit the N.C.A.C. and Central fronts; but I did not reach the latter. On leaving Lieut.-General Stilwell's battlefield, I sustained an injury to my left eye which was to keep me for a week in the U.S. 20th General Hospital at Ledo, with both eyes bandaged. On the 8th, the Japanese attack was launched—a week earlier than had been expected. It opened with two thrusts from the south by 33 Japanese Division: one up the west bank of the Manipur River in the Tiddim area, and the other northwards up the Kabaw Valley in the Tamu area. And by the night of the 15th, 15 and 31 Japanese Divisions crossed the Chindwin in strength at several widely separated points north of Tamu.[1] I had been able to keep in touch by means of the "Mercury",[2] and Major-General Wildman-Lushington, my Assistant Chief of Staff, had paid daily visits to formation headquarters, returning each evening to report to me. On the 13th, I left hospital and flew to Comilla to confer with Lieut.-General Slim and Air Marshal Baldwin.

98. Early in the month it had been decided that, if there was a risk of 17 Indian Division being cut off, it should be withdrawn to Imphal and renew its counter-offensive role. The Commanders were naturally reluctant to abandon territory; and if withdrawal was inevitable, they were anxious that the wounded and non-combatants, together with supplies and transport, should also be evacuated. Lieut.-General Slim had ordered the withdrawal; but the date had been left to the divisional commander. The division had in fact not begun to withdraw until the 14th March—and it found its route to Imphal cut off by a strong force of 33 Japanese Division. (Lieut.-General Scoones was consequently forced for the next three weeks to commit against 33 Japanese Division all the Corps reserves in the Imphal Plain.) Lieut.-General Slim pointed out that it was essential to reinforce these reserves as soon as possible; and this could only be done by accelerating the move of 5 Indian Division from Arakan. He had hoped to move the main body with its light transport by air, while the remainder with its heavy transport went overland; and the division was already being disengaged from current operations and withdrawn to Chittagong in readiness. But the move could not be carried out by air, as Air Marshal Baldwin reported that there were no transport aircraft to spare.

99. It was clear that, unless Troop Carrier Command—which was already fully employed and disposed of only eight Dakota (C-47) squadrons (four British and four American)—received additional aircraft from some other source, it could not bring up reinforcements in time to influence the course of the battle. Since a delay of several weeks, which a move over our congested land lines of communication would have involved, might have had fatal results, I decided to take the responsibility for ordering the necessary aircraft to be diverted from the Hump route immediately. I therefore instructed Air Marshal Baldwin to request Major-General Stratemeyer to take thirty Dakotas (or their equivalent[3]) off the Hump; and to

[1] See Map 12.

[2] A Dakota (C-47), equipped as a mobile wireless and cypher station, which during 2½ years accompanied me for more than 200,000 miles. Preceding my own aircraft, it enabled me from the moment of my arrival to be in direct touch with my Headquarters, and through them with London and every part of the theatre. This device enabled me to avoid imposing extra strain on the cypher staffs of Army, Corps and Group communications—besides greatly speeding up my own communications. I owed this to the foresight of my Signal Officer-in-Chief, Captain M. Hodges, R.N. A similar aircraft, the "Hermes", was later provided for the Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A.

[3] See 'B', paragraph 139 and its footnote.

place them at the disposal of Troop Carrier Command for transporting 5 Indian Division to the Central front. I also told him to inform Major-General Stratemeyer that I would take the necessary confirmatory action as soon as I returned to Delhi.

100. Lieut.-General Slim informed me that General Giffard had already sent him 50 Indian Parachute Brigade (two battalions). General Giffard had for some time been anxious to move another division to the Central front; but he considered that this was administratively impossible, owing to the heavy congestion on the lines of communication; and that, even if it were possible to move it to the Central front, the lines of communication would not be able to support it there. I told Lieut.-General Slim that I would instruct General Giffard to take all administrative risks, and to reinforce Fourteenth Army at once, with the Headquarters of 33 Corps and at least one of its divisions.[1]

101. I returned to Delhi on the evening of the 13th, and told General Giffard of my discussions at Comilla. He said that he had for some time been in touch with General Auchinleck on the subject of moving part of 33 Corps to the Fourteenth Army. I pressed him to lose no time in arranging with G.H.Q. (I.) for reinforcements from 33 Corps to be sent to the Central front at the earliest possible moment. He pointed out the great administrative difficulty involved in moving and maintaining even one more division forward from Dimapur; but I insisted that preparations for this should be pressed forward as a matter of great urgency, and that all administrative risks must be taken. Next day, General Giffard flew to Comilla for discussions with Lieut.-General Slim, and the orders for the move were issued.[2]

102. On the 16th March, I telegraphed to the British Chiefs of Staff and J.S.M., Washington, that, unless I received orders to the contrary before the 18th, I would order thirty Dakotas (C-47) off the Hump route—they had in fact already been ordered off—for the immediate fly-in of 5 Indian Division. In my telegram I again raised the question of being granted authority to divert aircraft in emergency from U.S. Air Transport Command without having to obtain authority for this, through Lieut.-General Stilwell, from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. I pointed out that during the Arakan emergency it had taken seven days to obtain a reply from Washington; and that this was far too long when one was faced with an operational crisis, whose time factors could only be judged on the spot. I also made it clear that, if the present battle were lost, the complete severance of the Assam line of communication, on which the air route to China depended, was inevitable.

103. On the 16th, I issued written orders to confirm my verbal orders of the 13th that the necessary aircraft were to be diverted—regardless of whether or not a reply was received from the Chiefs of Staff before the 18th. Such an order was contrary to my directive, as well as to my personal instructions from the President; and I realised that I was risking his goodwill and that of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff by taking this independent action, and by asking for a very rapid covering approval on a matter of such importance. But I considered that nothing mattered but the battle; and that the Hump route would in any case be lost if this went against us. I was fully supported in this view by the British Chiefs of Staff; as well as by the Prime Minister, who telegraphed on the 18th that he had personally approached the President. Approval from Washington came the same day, for the aircraft to be diverted and retained for one month; but the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff did not agree that I should be given *carte blanche* to divert aircraft in future emergencies.

104. In the third week of March, the Japanese offensive continued to gather momentum: the main body of 31 Japanese Division being directed against Kohima. Our few advanced troops put up a spirited fight; but towards the end of the month they were driven back by greatly superior numbers. Their action had, however, gained valuable time for the preparation of the Kohima defences. Columns of 31 Japanese Division also attacked in the Ukhrul area, where our position had been seriously weakened by our need to withdraw a brigade of 23 Indian Division for the battle south of Imphal. The defence of Ukhrul was left to 50 Indian Parachute Brigade (at that time consisting only of two small battalions) which had been flown in at the beginning of March. This force fought a fierce and gallant action against strong enemy forces. On the 29th March it began to fall back towards Imphal; but it had inflicted heavy casualties and by its defence of Ukhrul it had held up the Japanese advance down the Ukhrul–Imphal road for several days—giving the leading units of 5 Indian Division (which had just arrived from Arakan) time to concentrate at Imphal.

[1] 33 Corps was being held in India at the time, for use in amphibious operations.

[2] The move of 5 Indian Division by air and rail from Arakan to the Central front began on the 19th March and finished early in April. Two brigades, with their jeeps and other light equipment, joined 4 Corps at Imphal by the 27th March; the third brigade was flown direct to Dimapur to join the first arrivals of 33 Corps.

105. At the same time, the main body of 15 Japanese Division set out to cut the Ukhrul–Imphal road south of Ukhrul itself (which was 31 Japanese Division's responsibility). It succeeded in doing this by the end of the month, after our evacuation of the town; and then turned south-west against Imphal. At the same time 31 Japanese Division crossed the hills to the west, and succeeded on the 29th March in establishing a road block on the Imphal–Kohima road. In the meantime, in the Imphal Plain, preparations for withstanding a siege continued; and defended areas, which had been sited primarily so as to include airfields and other important installations, were now stocked with food and ammunition. Those non-combatants who could not be withdrawn were brought into the defended areas; but many were evacuated by road, as well as by air.[1]

106. In the last half of March, steps were being taken to provide further reinforcements for 4 Corps, and also to allow Lieut.-General Scoones (who at the beginning of the battle had been responsible for Kohima as well as the Imphal front) to concentrate on the main battle at Imphal, by bringing in Lieut.-General Stopford and the Headquarters of 33 Corps to take command of the Dimapur–Kohima area. General Auchinleck had arranged to rush forward from India the Headquarters of 33 Corps, 2 British Division, 268 Indian Infantry Brigade,[2] two regiments of tanks, and other troops. Fortunately, the capacity of the Bengal-Assam Railway which had now come under military control, was beginning to increase. The evacuation of labour personnel and other non-combatants from in front of the Dimapur base, in trains which had brought reinforcements up, made the resources of the base available for maintaining the forces of 33 Corps as they moved in; and the move of 2 British Division (which was made smoothly and swiftly) began on the 24th March. Lieut.-General Slim had in the meantime decided to bring in 7 Indian Division from Arakan by air on the heels of 5 Indian Division. The move of 7 Indian Division began on the 6th April: two brigades were to join 33 Corps at Dimapur, and the third was to join 4 Corps at Imphal.

107. On the 3rd April, Lieut.-General Stopford and a skeleton staff of 33 Corps arrived at Jorhat, in Northern Assam; where I met him and Lieut.-Generals Slim and Stilwell the same day. Lieut.-General Stilwell was understandably worried about the security of his lines of communication; not only for the N.C.A.C. front, but even more so for the air route over the Hump. Lieut.-General Slim had already had to refuse a request from Northern Air Sector Force for troops to provide local defence on the U.S. airfields in the Brahmaputra Valley, since all available forces were urgently needed for the defence of Kohima. Lieut.-General Stilwell therefore proposed to send 38 Chinese Division to the Dinjan area, to protect his own line of communication in Assam; for if this were permanently cut his forces would be in a most precarious position. He pointed out, however, that if he withdrew 38 Chinese Division from the advancing forces, he would have to postpone the advance on Myitkyina and consolidate on the present position north of Kamaing.

108. Lieut.-General Slim was most reluctant that this should happen, just at a time when all the enemy's striking forces in Northern Burma were committed to battle either against 4 Corps or against Wingate's Special Force—since this was the moment for Lieut.-General Stilwell's troops to profit from the diversion elsewhere of so large a part of the forces which the Japanese might otherwise use to reinforce the N.C.A.C. front. He therefore declined Lieut.-General Stilwell's offer; and, guaranteeing that the N.C.A.C. lines of communication would not be interrupted for more than ten days, he directed him to advance on Myitkyina with all his forces, with the greatest possible speed. When I met Lieut.-General Slim at Comilla on the 9th, I told him that I fully approved his decision.

109. Lieut.-General Slim had given Lieut.-General Stopford three tasks for 33 Corps:—

(*a*) immediate task: to prevent Japanese infiltration or penetration into the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys, or through the Lushai Hills;

(*b*) to keep open the main Dimapur–Kohima–Imphal road line of communication to 4 Corps; and

(*c*) to be prepared to move to the assistance of 4 Corps and to help in any possible way to destroy the enemy west of the river Chindwin.

The defence of the Kohima–Dimapur area had been allotted to the Commander, 202 Lines of Communication Area; and a commander had been appointed to Kohima itself. The immediate need was to bring up and place under Lieut.-General Stopford sufficient troops to meet the Japanese attack on these two towns.

[1] Aircraft that had flown in supplies and troops took out non-combatants on their return trip; and the process of evacuation by air was in fact continued right up to the end of the battle, and by the end of June about 50,000 had been taken out.

[2] 268 Indian Infantry Brigade was far stronger than the ordinary brigade group, and nearer the strength of a light division, having up to six battalions as well as a proportion of divisional troops and artillery with them.

110. At the beginning of April, while 33 Corps was being built up to meet the serious situation that was developing at the northern end of the front, 4 Corps had been opposing determined efforts by 15 and 33 Japanese Divisions to overrun the Imphal Plain.[1] It soon became clear that if we could hold Imphal we should not only be able to inflict very heavy casualties on the enemy; but there was every hope that, when we had worn down the enemy's attacks, we would be able to stage a successful counter-offensive. But one Japanese force had got so close to Imphal itself, that when I landed at the main Imphal airstrip on the 8th April, it was already under intermittent fire from Japanese howitzers.

111. I had a heartening discussion with Lieut.-General Scoones and was glad to find that neither he nor any of his commanders was unduly worried by the situation—which on the map looked extremely discouraging. The main road from Dimapur to Imphal had been cut at Kohima in the north; and the Bishenpur track from Imphal to Silchar in the south-west, the only other line of communication, had been cut as well. 4 Corps was, in fact, completely isolated by land; and the Japanese were surrounding the Imphal Plain. Lieut.-General Scoones' plan was firstly to prevent the Japanese from gaining any footing in the Plain itself, and to stabilise the general position; secondly, to re-establish a force in the Ukhrul area and cut the enemy's line of communication in the east; and thirdly, to use the largest possible offensive force against 15 and 33 Japanese Divisions in all parts of the Plain.

112. On the 4th April, the Japanese had opened their attack on Kohima with two regiments and, as they gained dominating positions in and around the town, had gradually pushed back the garrison from its outer defences. The tactical situation now became critical. Plans for the defence of the town had been based on the supposition that, owing to the difficulties of movement and maintenance in the Naga Hills, the Japanese would not be able to bring more than one regimental group against the area. In point of fact they soon brought the whole of 31 Japanese Division, which greatly out-numbered the scratch garrison; and this large force was now threatening not only Kohima, but also our main base at Dimapur and the whole of the Assam lines of communication.

113. It was doubtful whether or not the garrison could hold out until Lieut.-General Stopford had received sufficient reinforcements and could form a force strong enough to take the offensive. He estimated that his own Headquarters, two brigades of 2 British Division (which was on its way) and 23 L.R.P. Brigade[2] (which was being detached from the Special Force at Jhansi, in Central India) could be concentrated around Dimapur by the 15th April. But if 31 Japanese Division kept up the speed of its advance, it could probably reach Dimapur and the Assam Railway (which appeared to be the enemy's main objectives) by the 11th. He therefore decided to detach a brigade from 5 Indian Division and to send it, together with a battalion of the Burma Regiment, to hold the Nichuguard Pass, ten miles south of Dimapur. On the 5th April, the two leading battalions of 2 British Division arrived at Dimapur. Lieut.-General Stopford now decided to take the risk of using only these two battalions and the battalion of the Burma Regiment for protecting the base and the railway; and ordered the brigade of 5 Indian Division to turn south again to the relief of the garrison at Kohima.[3]

114. On the 7th the enemy captured the main water supply of Kohima, but fortunately the garrison found another source, and additional supplies were dropped by air. On the 8th the enemy began an all-out attack, from every direction, on the main position at Kohima; whose heterogeneous garrison (which included convalescents from the hospital) held out grimly, but were gradually forced into a smaller and smaller area, until they were finally driven on to Garrison Hill, which dominated the main road.[4] Here they continued to be successfully supplied from the air with food, water and ammunition; though they provided only a pin-point target for the supply-dropping aircraft, who had to fly at tree-top height over this small hill, which was often partially veiled in low cloud. By the 10th, the leading brigade of 2 British Division was advancing to the relief of the garrison, while the remainder of the division completed its concentration.

115. At the end of March, owing to the critical situation on this front, I had agreed that Lieut.-General Slim should place 23 L.R.P. Brigade[5] under Lieut.-General Stopford to cut the enemy's lines of communication. I considered that its training in long-range penetration technique would stand it in good stead in the short-range penetration that would now be needed. On the 12th April the mobile columns of 23 L.R.P. Brigade, which had been guarding the railway at Jorhat, were ordered south to protect the

[1] See Map 13.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 115.

[3] One battalion reached the town on the 6th, too late to prevent the occupation of the greater part of it; the remaining two battalions were halted by enemy opposition three miles short of Kohima.

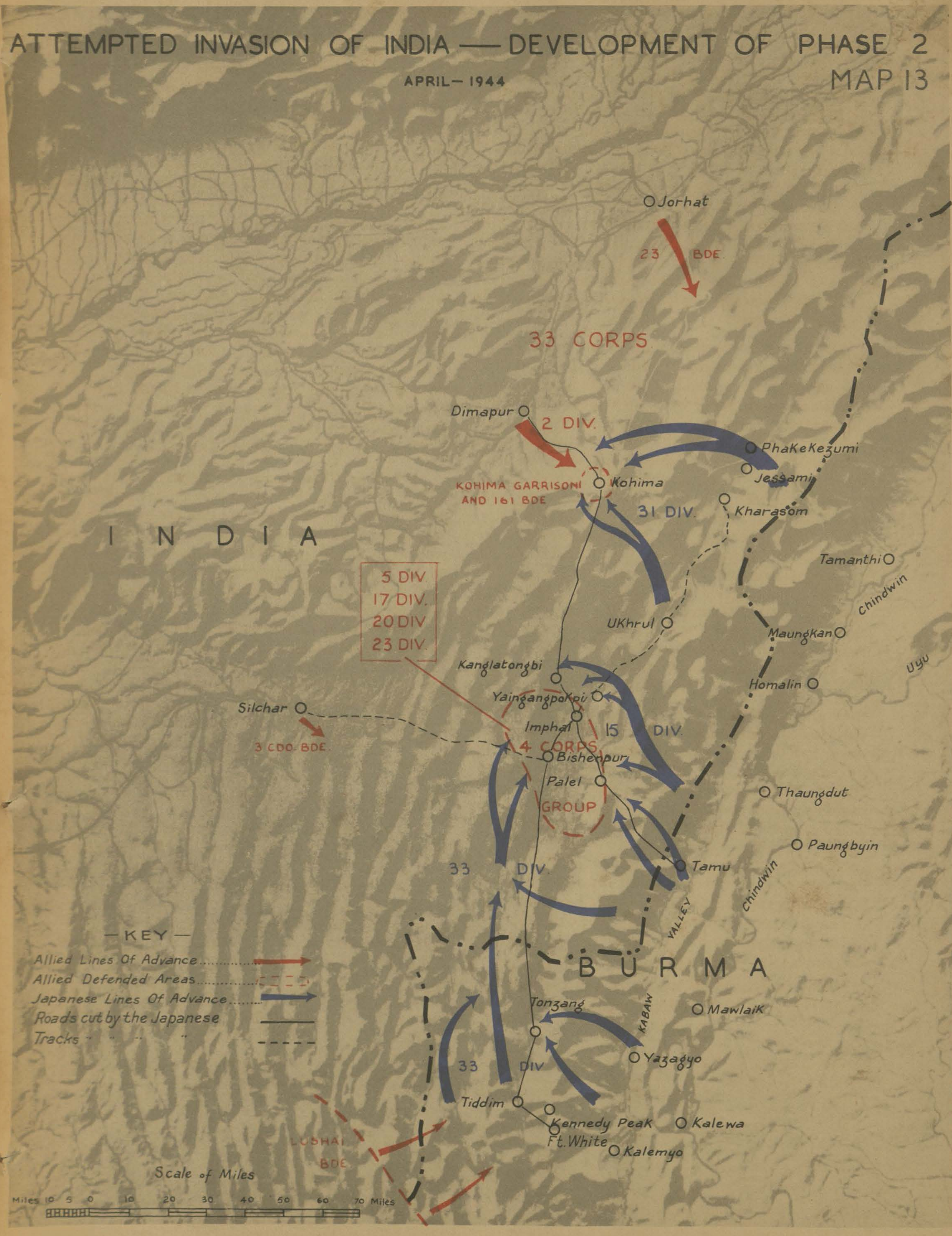
[4] See Map 14 (facing page 49).

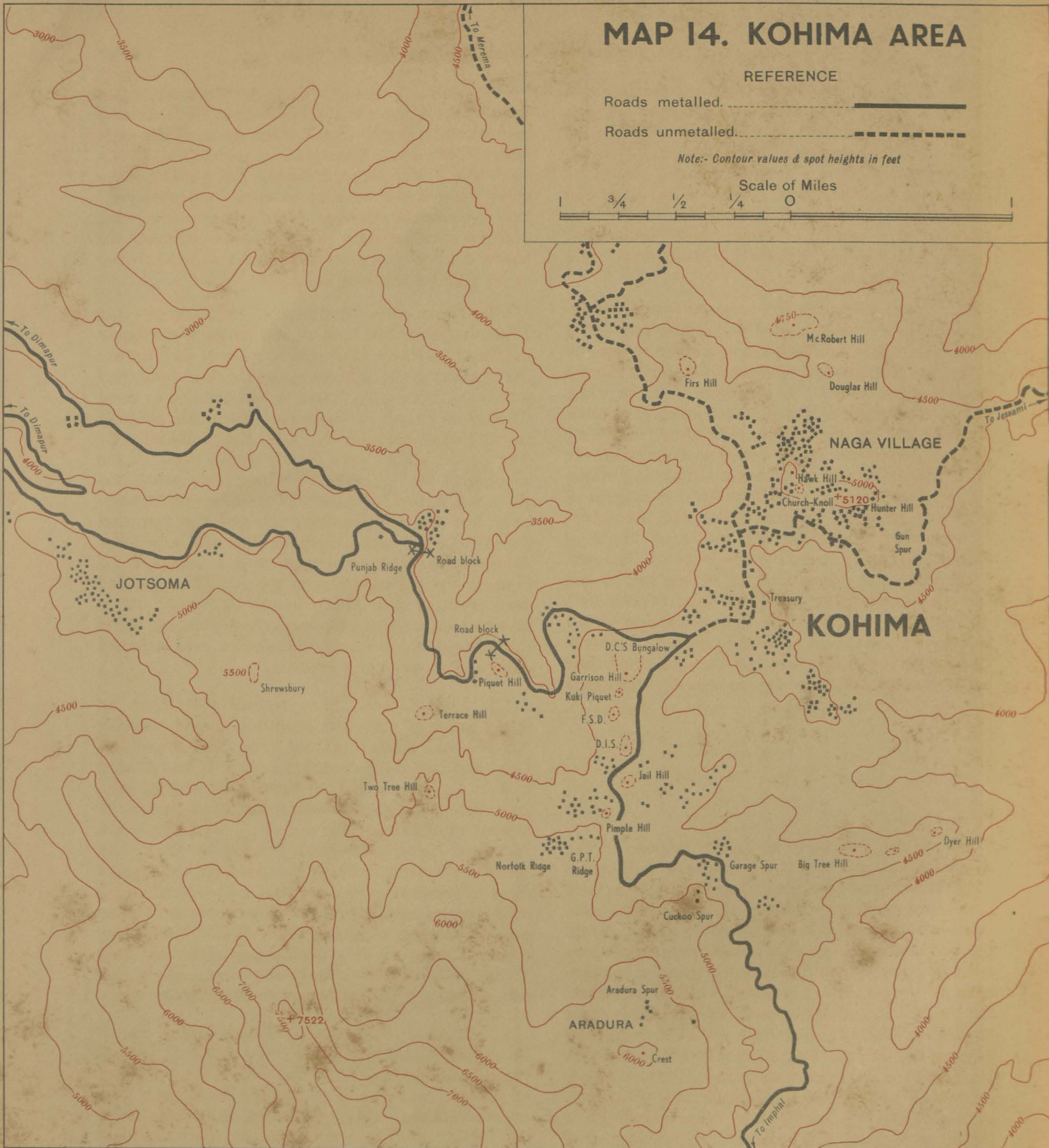
[5] The only brigade of Major-General Wingate's Special Force which was not yet committed.

# ATTEMPTED INVASION OF INDIA — DEVELOPMENT OF PHASE 2

APRIL — 1944

MAP 13





MAP 14. KOHIMA AREA
REFERENCE
Roads metalled.
Roads unmetalled.
Note:- Contour values & spot heights in feet
Scale of Miles
1 3/4 1/2 1/4 0 1
To Merema
To Dimapur
To Dimapur
To Jessami
To Imphal
JOTSOMA
Punjab Ridge
Road block
Road block
Piquet Hill
Terrace Hill
Shrewsbury
Two Tree Hill
Firs Hill
McRobert Hill
Douglas Hill
NAGA VILLAGE
Hawk Hill
Church Knoll
5120
Hunter Hill
Gun Spur
Treasury
KOHIMA
D.C'S Bungalow
Garrison Hill
Kuki Piquet
F.S.D.
D.I.S.
Jail Hill
Pimple Hill
Norfolk Ridge
G.P.T. Ridge
Garage Spur
Big Tree Hill
Dyer Hill
Cuckoo Spur
Aradura Spur
ARADURA
Crest
7522

left flank of 2 British Division and cut the Japanese lines of communication west of the Chindwin. By this time, 33 Corps had taken over effective control of the area, and was being steadily reinforced. All troop movements had been set in train; and thanks to magnificent work on the part of India Command and our own lines of communication organisation, 2 British Division was coming forward with remarkable rapidity and 7 Indian Division was being flown from Arakan to Dimapur.[1]

116. Fortunately, the Japanese were showing remarkable lack of resiliency; they confined themselves to continued assault on Kohima, and made no attempt to by-pass Kohima and advance in strength beyond their positions astride the Dimapur–Kohima road, though their original intention had been to capture Dimapur and cut the railway. Therefore, they were now being compelled by the strength of our resistance to concentrate instead on the reduction of the garrison and relieving forces. On the 20th April, 6 Brigade of 2 British Division, coming down the Dimapur–Kohima road, broke through the road block at Kohima after very heavy fighting west of the town. In the course of this action, the enemy put in two strong counter-attacks, but these were broken with the assistance of Hurricane fighter-bombers of 221 Group; and it was now possible to force 31 Japanese Division on to the defensive and start attacking their heavily bunkered defences. On the same day, 6 Brigade relieved the Kohima garrison.

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On the 5th February, 16 L.R.P. Brigade of the Special Force had set out on foot with their mules from Ledo;[2] and throughout February had trekked south-west over very difficult country, which was practically uninhabited and almost trackless. From the 10th February onwards it had been supplied by air, and its maintenance became a permanent commitment of Troop Carrier Command. On the 2nd March, the leading columns crossed the Chindwin near Singkaling Hkamti, using rafts and rubber dinghies dropped by No. 1 Air Commando. Pushing south they fought a few minor engagements (including a diversionary raid on Lonkin which was undertaken in support of Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces advancing down the Hukawng Valley); and reached the Mawhun–Rail Indaw area, by-passing Indawgyi Lake, by the third week in March, after an arduous trek of over 450 miles.

118. During February, No. 1 Air Commando had carried out numerous reconnaissance and offensive operations in preparation for the fly-in of the main body of Wingate's Special Force (Operation THURSDAY) which was planned for the 5th March; and a close watch had been kept on enemy concentrations and movements. Attempts were made to divert the enemy's attention from the Rail Indaw area; but the enemy did not react as we hoped, and made no change in his plan for invading India.

119. Three sites—BROADWAY, PICCADILLY and CHOWRINGHEE—had been chosen for the glider-borne landings; they were all within 50 miles of Rail Indaw: the first two to the north-east, and the third south-east across the Irrawaddy. It was at first planned to carry 77 Brigade in two halves, making two main landings of 50 gliders each on PICCADILLY and BROADWAY. The leading gliders were already loaded when, on the evening of the 5th March—half-an-hour before the fly-in was due to begin—a final air photograph (taken only five hours previously) revealed the fact that PICCADILLY had been entirely blocked with large trees, drawn across in such a manner that no space for landing was left anywhere in the area. This site had been reported clear as late as the 1st March; and it now seemed as though the enemy had found out about the operation. However, BROADWAY was reported clear and so was CHOWRINGHEE.

120. Lieut.-General Slim decided that, from an Army point of view, the operation should proceed; Air Marshal Baldwin agreed from the Air point of view, and issued the necessary orders. It was decided to launch the whole of 77 Brigade on BROADWAY only; and not to use CHOWRINGHEE at this stage, because its lay-out was different from that of the other two strips, and there was no time left for briefing the pilots. The first wave carried the brigade commander and a small force of combat troops; together with a detachment of American airfield engineers, whose task was to prepare the strip to receive Dakotas (C-47) of Troop Carrier Command on the following night. But only 35 out of 61 gliders reached BROADWAY, owing to a combination of unfavourable circumstances.

121. First of all, the heavily loaded gliders had to be towed in pairs because of the shortage of tug aircraft. Secondly, in order to allow the nylon tow-ropes to unkink, these had been laid out for about a fortnight along the edge of the Lalaghat airstrip, where every truck drove over them with impunity; they had probably also been weakened by the strong sun by day with a drop in temperature and heavy dew by

[1] See 'B', paragraph 106.

[2] See Map 10 (facing page 37).

night. Thirdly, since the operation was carried out by night and launched from air bases which were very near the mountains, the pilots had to make a very rapid climb to operational height; and the excessive drag on the tug aircraft in many cases caused engines to overheat and fuel consumption to become abnormal. In these circumstances, some of the tug pilots had no alternative but to abandon their missions; and in extreme cases to cut the gliders adrift.

122. For these reasons many gliders either came adrift or had to be cut loose. Two landed in the immediate neighbourhood of a Japanese divisional headquarters, while three more came down near a regimental headquarters. On BROADWAY itself many gliders crash-landed, while others ran on to uneven ground which preliminary air reconnaissance had not shown. Since every wrecked glider became a source of potential danger to the next, a stage was reached when no more could be received; and the last flight was ordered to return to base.

123. In spite of the fact that wrecks had to be cleared away rapidly and that some engineering equipment had been lost, the American engineers, together with British and Gurkha troops, succeeded in preparing the strip by the next evening; when Troop Carrier Command undertook the main fly-in. Since BROADWAY, which was considered tactically more suitable, was again ready for use, it was decided to land only a part of 111 Brigade at CHOWRINGHEE and to fly the greater part of it on to BROADWAY. This phase of the operation ended successfully on the 11th March; and the force—which now consisted of 77 and 111 Brigades; their stronghold troops; and a number of officers and other ranks known as DAHFORCE, who were to raise Kachin Levies in the hills east of the Irrawaddy—immediately began to cut the enemy's main line of communication to the north.

124. The forced landings had provided an impromptu deception effect; and (according to an officer who succeeded in returning to base) caused the Japanese to dispose troops over every potential landing-ground in the district. It is probable that for about a week Japanese attention was diverted from the area of the main landings; so that our losses in gliders and their complements were largely counterbalanced. For it was not until the force had firmly established itself that the enemy appeared to realise where the landings had taken place, or showed any noticeable reaction. But it has subsequently been discovered from Japanese sources that he appreciated our intentions with considerable accuracy, and realised that our landings were designed:—

(*a*) to cut the Mandalay–Myitkyina railway and isolate 18 Japanese Division;

(*b*) to compel the diversion of troops from the Central front; and

(*c*) to consolidate a base behind his lines in Central Burma for future operations on a large scale.

125. The first action against the force was taken on the 10th March; when CHOWRINGHEE (which had fortunately just been evacuated) was bombed and strafed. On the 13th, thirty Japanese fighters made an unsuccessful attack on BROADWAY; four were brought down, for the loss of one Spitfire, for by this time the stronghold force, which included a troop of light anti-aircraft artillery, had been established; and a flight of Spitfires of 221 Group had begun to operate from the strip. The first real clash between Special Force and the enemy occurred on the 16th March: 77 Brigade attacked Japanese positions near Mawlu, and killed over 100 of the enemy; they then established the WHITE CITY block and airstrip, near Mawlu, which cut the road and rail communications of 18 Japanese Division opposing Lieut.-General Stilwell.

126. By the middle of the month, the Japanese offensive on the Central front had grown serious; and it was decided, in consultation with Major-General Wingate,[1] to accelerate his time-table and to fly in 14 Brigade and 3 West African Brigade (organised by battalions for the defence of brigade strongholds) to a new stronghold (ABERDEEN) in the Manhton area. Steps were taken to establish further airstrips and strongholds for the use of 14 Brigade; and also for 16 Brigade, which needed a base for operations against Rail Indaw—as well as time to rest and refit after its arduous march.

127. The second phase of the fly-in began on the 22nd March. Unfortunately, it coincided with the most critical stage of the main battle on the Central front, during which almost all available transport aircraft had to be used for supplying 4 Corps and transporting 5 Indian Division from the Arakan to the Central front. Very few transport aircraft could therefore be allocated; but it was decided to go ahead with the operation all the same. The fly-in of 14 Brigade was completed on the 4th April, and that of 3 West African Brigade on the 12th April. These operations were hindered not only by shortage of transport aircraft; but also by spells of bad weather,

[1] On the 24th March Major-General Wingate was killed in an air crash while being flown from Imphal to Lalaghat by night in a Mitchell (B-25). He was succeeded as Divisional Commander by Brigadier (later Major-General) W. D. A. Lentaigne.

which at one time or another put all the fair-weather strips out of action. There was some interference by enemy aircraft; which took advantage of the fact that the area to which the brigades were flown in was beyond the effective range of our fighter-aircraft, to make sporadic attacks on the strips from the 28th March onwards.

128. I had visited Lieut.-General Stilwell's front on the 6th March, at the time his forces were beginning to gain the upper hand over 18 Japanese Division, and had been greatly impressed by the way they were fighting. At the beginning of the month GALAHAD Force had taken Walawbum by a skilful out-flanking movement, cutting off a large Japanese force in the Walawbum–Maingkwan area[1]. On the 19th, the Fort Hertz detachments took Sumprabum and pursued the enemy a long way to the south; and on the same day the leading columns of the main force crossed the pass into the Mogaung valley and advanced against fierce resistance to Shaduzup, which was invested during the last week in March and fell on the 30th.

129. 18 Japanese Division, which Lieut.-General Stilwell was now in the process of beating, had been chiefly responsible for the capture of Singapore; and the defeat of this crack division was not only a tactical success preparing the way for the final reconquest of Northern Burma, but was also notable as another victory over troops which had not until then been defeated. The fighting spirit of the Chinese troops had at first appeared to be poor; but the successes they gained at this period, the example set by GALAHAD Force, and Lieut.-General Stilwell's energetic leadership, combined to have a stimulating effect. In the month of March, they inflicted heavy losses on the Japanese, and their fighting spirit was rising higher with each success.

130. Confident that his objectives in Northern Burma could be realised by the end of the present campaigning season, Lieut.-General Stilwell was now making plans for the capture of Myitkyina. He intended to keep pressure on 18 Japanese Division while a force of three columns (each of one American and two Chinese battalions) made an outflanking advance through the Nauri Pass and over the Kumon Range (which divides the valleys of the Mogaung and the Irrawaddy) to take Myitkyina airstrip. This was to be followed by a fly-in of Chinese reinforcements to capture the town itself.

131. In order to make these operations a success, reinforcements would be needed to give relief to the Chinese divisions under Lieut.-General Stilwell's command, which now numbered three—30 Chinese Division having been added to 22 and 38; and he had been trying since January to persuade the Generalissimo to let him have a fourth Chinese division—so far, without success. At this stage, neither General Giffard nor General Auchinleck could make a British, Indian, or African division available; and it was in any case desirable that the new division should be Chinese—not only to preserve the homogeneity of Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces, but also because maintaining a Chinese division was less of a strain on our lines of communication.

132. Lieut.-General Stilwell and I were agreed that an immediate advance from Yunnan would be of special value now; since it would contain 56 Japanese Division, and might cause a diversion of enemy troops which would otherwise be available for holding up the N.C.A.C. forces. At a time when almost the whole enemy force in Burma was heavily committed, an advance from Yunnan, supported by the 14th U.S.A.A.F. from China and assisted by operations of Special Force against the enemy lines of communication, could hardly fail to succeed against the opposition of only one Japanese division. If the advance succeeded, it would greatly strengthen the morale of the Chinese Army and people—a factor which always played so important a part in the Generalissimo's calculations whenever he took a military decision.

133. On the 17th March, therefore, I telegraphed to the Chiefs of Staff, requesting that the Generalissimo be approached as to the possibility of transferring a division from Yunnan to Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces. I also strongly urged that the President and Prime Minister should make personal approaches to the Generalissimo, not only about the transfer of this division, but also about an advance from Yunnan by the Chinese Expeditionary Force. They immediately did this; and at the end of March the Generalissimo gave his consent for the transfer of 50 Chinese Division from Yunnan.[2] But he gave no decision on the question of a general advance of the main Yunnan force.

[1] See Map 9 (facing page 36).
[2] In the middle of April it was transferred by air from Sookerating to Maingkwan, coming into action under Lieut.-General Stilwell early in May. 14 Chinese Division followed soon after.

# SYNOPSIS

# B STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

## SECTION THREE: APRIL TO JUNE 1944

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AXIOM Mission discussions in London and Washington; U.S. offer of four Combat Cargo Groups, and four more Air Commandos; Aircraft diverted to S.E.A.C. from the Mediterranean; Views on future strategy communicated to the Chiefs of Staff; Parallel exchanges of views between C.B.I. Theatre and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; Engineering projects for Burma in support of China-based air forces.

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Shortage of transport aircraft; Japanese attempt to capture Imphal fails; Proposed re-organisation of Army/Air co-operation; Whitworth-Jones Committee is set up.

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*Page* 59

Myitkyina airfield captured; Yunnan Force crosses the Salween; Transport aircraft diverted to supply the Yunnan Force; Appointment of Commander-in-Chief for Allied land forces in S.E.A.C. requested; Lieut.-General Stilwell captures Kamaing, and comes under my direct command; Gradual withdrawal of the Special Force.

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*Page* 64

Exchange of views with the Chiefs of Staff; Parallel exchange between U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and Lieut.-General Stilwell; New directive received from the Chiefs of Staff; Army and Air Force inter-command adjustments; Troop Carrier Command disbanded; Revised air plan for support of the China-based air forces; 15 Corps take up monsoon dispositions; Counter-offensive on the Central front; Imphal relieved; the Kohima–Imphal road re-opened.

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On the 23rd April the AXIOM Mission returned to Delhi. During two months spent in London and Washington Major-General Wedemeyer had seen the Prime Minister, the President, and the British and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; and he and his party had held discussions with the Planning Staffs in both capitals. The Combined Chiefs of Staff had not been persuaded to adopt what I believed to be the most advantageous strategy for South-East Asia; but the visit had been valuable in so far as it had made the British and U.S. Chiefs of Staff more fully conversant with the problems peculiar to the theatre—and this was important, since a new directive was about to be issued to me. The Prime Minister and the British Chiefs of Staff had been in agreement with my plans for current and future operations in Burma, and with my general ideas on future overall strategy. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the other hand, appeared to be thinking solely in terms of China and of Northern Burma as a supply route to China; they accepted my contention that the maximum air effort should be made to support the air forces based on China, but they disagreed with my proposed method of implementing this.

135. In my opinion, the reconquest of Northern Burma would make the air route more secure; but the permanent security of the Ledo Road, in which the Americans were primarily interested, could only be guaranteed if top priority were given to the clearance of Burma as a whole. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had also had Lieut.-General Stilwell's point of view presented to them: both by Major-General Wedemeyer (on my instructions), and by Brigadier-General B. G. Ferris, who headed Lieut.-General Stilwell's independent mission, which had arrived in Washington a month before my own.[1] They had come to the conclusion that the air effort from China could best be supported by establishing air bases and a large staging area at Myitkyina, and by pushing ahead with opening the land route into China as fast as possible.

136. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff considered that the main advantage lay, not in the actual tonnage the road would carry, but in the greatly increased supplies of petrol (gasoline) which the pipe-line, running parallel with the road, would bring to the China-based air forces. They had accordingly recommended to the British Chiefs of Staff that I be ordered: (*a*) to concentrate all land and air effort in South-East Asia on clearing Northern Burma (including the early capture and development of Myitkyina as a major air base), so as to increase the capacity of the air-transport line to China; and (*b*) to carry the pipe-line through by one route or another, if possible, by early 1945.

137. The AXIOM Mission pointed out, when this plan was put before them, that the road to China would only remain secured if we retained the initiative and continued to advance. Major-General Wedemeyer, moreover, stressed that an offensive in Burma presented logistical difficulties of a quite special nature, and that fighting troops could not be effectively supplied without air transport. I had already foreseen that as the campaign progressed we would be faced with the necessity of providing air-supply to the land forces on an unprecedented scale, and that several hundred additional transport aircraft would be needed; and I had instructed Major-General Wedemeyer to put this point forcibly.

138. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had been impressed by these arguments; and had agreed that, in order to give land operations in Northern Burma the greatest possible chance of success, the existing transport aircraft (amounting at that time to 76 American and British planes) must be reinforced. On the 25th March, General Arnold offered to set up four Special Combat Cargo Groups for S.E.A.C., each containing a hundred Dakotas (C-47), and also to build up four more Air Commandos. The first of each of these was to reach us in July, and the remainder at regular intervals during the rest of the year.

139. The air-supply situation had been a recurring source of worry, and had been kept constantly under review. In the third week of March it was becoming clear that Troop Carrier Command (already committed to supplying the Special Force, Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces, and 81 West African Division) could not undertake to supply the garrisons at Imphal and Kohima as well, unless it was strongly reinforced. On the 25th March (the very day of General Arnold's generous offer) I had therefore had to ask the Combined Chiefs of Staff to allow me to retain, for longer than the one month for which their loan had been authorised, the 20 Commandos (C-46)[2] which had been diverted from the Hump route for the fly-in of

[1] See 'B', paragraph 31.

[2] The lift of 20 Commandos (C-46) is the same as that of 30 Dakotas (C-47)—the former being bigger aircraft. (See 'B', paragraph 99.)

5 Indian Division. I also asked them to provide a further 70 Dakotas (C-47)—or their equivalent—as reinforcements.

140. The Combined Chiefs of Staff decided not to divert more aircraft from the Hump route, nor to allow me to retain the 20 from that route which I already had on loan. They decided instead to divert from the Mediterranean theatre one U.S. Troop Carrier Group of 64 Dakotas (C-47) which I might retain for one month; and a British Transport Squadron of 15 Dakotas (C-47), which I would have to return in May. These 79 aircraft arrived early in April, and began to operate immediately. Major-General Stratemeyer appealed to me, through Air Chief Marshal Peirse, to arrange that they should be retained at least until the 1st July—by which time it was expected that the first of the Combat Cargo Groups would arrive—for we should find ourselves in a serious predicament if they were returned without replacement: particularly since one squadron of Troop Carrier Command was earmarked to go to China to supply the Chinese Expeditionary Force.[1] Major-General Stratemeyer said that if the 79 aircraft from the Middle East could be retained, he would be in a position to return immediately the 20 Commandos (C-46) borrowed from the Hump route in March.

141. Knowing how much store the President and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff set by the Hump route, I gladly agreed that this should be done: the 20 Commandos were immediately withdrawn, 10 being returned to the Hump route on the 20th April, and the remainder as soon as essential engine repairs had been made.[2] I reported this action to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in support of my request to be allowed to retain the Middle East aircraft, either until the battle allowed of their release, or until the first instalment of Combat Cargo aircraft arrived. (I urged that everything should be done to hasten the delivery of these, and I even suggested that they should be temporarily attached to the Middle East[3] in place of those borrowed from that theatre.)

142. The Combined Chiefs of Staff informed me on the 16th May that they did not accept my suggestion that the first batch of U.S. Combat Cargo aircraft should be diverted to the Middle East; but that I could retain the 79 borrowed aircraft until the 15th July, since they expected that by that date, or even earlier, the first Combat Cargo Group would have become operational. I was told to return these aircraft in small numbers as soon as replacements became available, and not to wait until the 15th July to return them *en bloc*.

143. The question of amphibious operations in S.E.A.C. had been taken up by the AXIOM Mission. They had found that, while the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff were determined to send to the Pacific all U.S. landing-ships and landing-craft which were not needed in Europe, the British Chiefs of Staff were unwilling to release any British amphibious resources from the European theatre until Germany had been virtually defeated. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, was still anxious that the operation against Northern Sumatra (CULVERIN) should be carried out; but he eventually agreed that the necessary resources could not be made available for this operation—or at any rate, not as we had planned it. He therefore instructed the British Joint Planners and the AXIOM Mission to devise another plan for the same operation, based on reduced resources. The new plans which they produced, however, did not offer sufficient saving of material; so the Prime Minister agreed that the operation was not feasible. He insisted, however, that a minor amphibious operation of some kind should be undertaken before the end of 1944.

144. On the 24th March, the British Chiefs of Staff had invited me to comment on the U.S. conception of future strategy; to summarize my own policy; and to estimate the resources (particularly transport aircraft) which would be required to implement it. The following factors were to be taken into account:—

(*a*) the acceleration of the American programme in the Pacific;

(*b*) the initial successes already gained, and in particular the satisfactory initial operations of Major-General Wingate's Special Force;

(*c*) the extent to which the possession of the Myitkyina airfields would be necessary for the protection of the air route to China;

(*d*) the Prime Minister's injunction, that I was not to "withdraw or withhold any forces from the campaign in Upper Burma for the sake of CULVERIN or any other amphibious operations"; and

(*e*) General Arnold's promise to send out four

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[1] See 'B', paragraphs 167 and 168.

[2] But I reserved the right to recall them, during the two months' period for which the loan had been authorised, if it became really necessary to do so.

[3] The Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean—General Sir Henry Maitland-Wilson (later Field-Marshal The Lord Wilson) —urged that 40 of the 79 borrowed aircraft should be returned by the end of May, and the remainder before 15th June.

Combat Cargo Groups and four more Air Commandos.

145. On the 14th April, I replied that it was not possible, in my opinion, to seize the area required for building and securing the road and pipe-line into China before the next monsoon; that the early capture of Myitkyina was of the greatest importance; and that the efforts of Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces and the Special Force were already directed towards this, with prospects of early success. I added that I planned to convert Myitkyina into a road terminal and oilhead, and to use it as an air base on a new and better air route to China, which would supplement, or even replace, the present Hump route. But I made it quite clear that our ability to capture and hold Myitkyina would depend on the decisive defeat of the main Japanese forces on the Central front, and on the advance of at least part of the Chinese Expeditionary Force from Yunnan. I therefore proposed that my new directive, in so far as it concerned Northern Burma, should be to develop, maintain, broaden and protect the air-link to China.

146. While these exchanges were going on between the British Chiefs of Staff and myself, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had also been communicating[1] with their Commanding Generals in the C.B.I. Theatre on the subject of strategy in South-East Asia. On the 13th April, General Arnold had sent Lieut.-General Stilwell and Major-General Stratemeyer details of the transport aircraft reinforcements which he proposed to send; pointing out that these aircraft were being diverted at high cost to other theatres, and that their retention in S.E.A.C. depended on detailed justification for their use—which was unexpected, for I had not been given to understand that any conditions attached to the original offer.

147. On the 16th April, General Marshall informed Lieut.-General Stilwell and his South-East Asia Deputy, Major-General Dan I. Sultan, of various engineering projects, with their target dates, which he considered should be undertaken in Burma to support the China-based forces which had been allotted to assist the Pacific operations in early 1945. He made it clear that the successful completion of these projects depended upon the capture of Myitkyina, and of the protective zone to the south; and that the target dates were based on the assumption that these essential land operations would be completed by the 1st January, 1945. I told Major-General Sultan that I wished to be associated with whatever reply was sent to Washington; but it turned out that the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff required a very early answer—by the 7th May—and when Major-General Sultan sent in his reply to General Marshall, my Headquarters had not yet had time to work out detailed comments.

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Although the beleaguered garrison at Kohima had been relieved by 2 British Division on the 20th April, Kohima itself was still held by units of 31 Japanese Division, who were fighting fiercely in the natural defensive positions afforded by the surrounding hills; which were so densely covered in jungle that they were almost—but, as it proved, not quite—inaccessible to our tanks. Moreover, the opening of the road-block into Kohima had not meant the opening of the main road between Kohima and Imphal, along which units of 15 and 31 Japanese Divisions were still entrenched in strength at several points—including our large supply dump at Kanglatongbi, north of Imphal. 4 Corps was still entirely dependent on air-supply, with no prospect of an early re-opening of land communications. In view of our shortages of transport aircraft, we could not afford to lose any; and air-supply would have been a dangerously uneconomic proposition if our superiority in the air had not been unquestioned. Fortunately, this had been established in the battle of Arakan, and the enemy had not subsequently seriously challenged it.

149. Short-range and long-range fighters[2] combined to establish this superiority; though, in the nature of things, the long-range fighters were able to contribute more to maintaining it. Modern types of short-range fighter, such as the Spitfire, were used defensively; and achieved great success in defeating enemy air attacks, having destroyed about 200 aircraft in January and February alone. Long-range fighters such as the Lightning (P-38) and Mustang (P-51) penetrated deep over enemy-held territory: here they could seek out enemy aircraft and attack them on the ground, at times when these would not fly forward to attack us if they feared that our short-range fighters could come into play. In this they achieved notable successes: a squadron of U.S. Lightnings (P-38), based on Chittagong, for example, having destroyed 106 Japanese aircraft in the first three months of the year. The gallant long-range work of the Beaufighters must also be mentioned. In their low-level attacks they created much havoc against communications, and suffered a higher loss rate than any other type of aircraft in the Theatre.

[1] See 'A', paragraph 20.

[2] See 'A', paragraph 77.

150. During April, transport squadrons, practically unmolested by enemy aircraft, provided continuous air-supply to 4 Corps. By the middle of the month, however, the garrison was needing nearly 500 tons a day; and owing to various difficulties (such as shortage of all-weather airfields and hard standings, having to extemporise a new organisation for packing and loading supplies on the airfields, and controlling and allocating the supply-dropping aircraft) this tonnage could not be met; and 4 Corps had to be reduced to half-rations.

151. By the 7th April, 17 Indian Division (which consisted of only two brigades) had, after long and hard fighting up the Tiddim Road from the south, succeeded in reaching Imphal, where it was immediately concentrated and re-formed north of the town.[1] In fighting its way up the road, this division (assisted in the later stages by troops of 23 Indian Division), had been opposed by most of 33 Japanese Division;[2] but by the expedient of holding the mountain ranges on either side of succeeding sections of the road it had managed to bring with it all its transport and vital stores, and its wounded as well. When the concentration of 17 Indian Division north of Imphal had been completed, a brigade of 23 Indian Division was established south of the town, on the Tiddim road; and on the 12th April this brigade was replaced by a brigade of 20 Indian Division, so that the whole of 23 Indian Division should be available for a counter-offensive to the north.

152. Lieut.-General Scoones now planned to recapture Ukhrul, so as to prevent further Japanese infiltration southward down the Kohima–Imphal road. He therefore sent 5 and 23 Indian Divisions north to attack 15 Japanese Division, which was holding the road, and operating in support of 31 Japanese Division, engaged at Kohima. By the end of April, 5 Indian Division, on the western axis, had reached a point ten miles from Imphal along the main road to Kohima; while on the eastern axis, 23 Indian Division had advanced 23 miles from Imphal along the track to Ukhrul. To the south-east, behind Tamu, 20 Indian Division (minus the brigade on the Tiddim road) was still holding Yamamoto Force[3] in front of Palel. It was decided to switch over 20 and 23 Indian Divisions; and on the 11th May 23 Indian Division began to take over along the Palel–Tamu road, while 20 Indian Division, operating in two columns, carried on the advance north to Ukhrul towards the end of the month.

153. To the south and south-west of Imphal, where on the 9th April 33 Japanese Division had completed the encirclement of 4 Corps by cutting the Bishenpur track from Imphal to Silchar, the enemy had made no further attempt to advance. But Lieut.-General Slim, fearing that an attempt might be made to cut the hill section of the railway running north from Silchar, to join the main Bengal–Assam line leading to Dimapur, had brought in 3 Commando Brigade from Arakan, to defend the railway and conduct offensive patrols eastward against 33 Japanese Division. At the same time the Lushai Brigade[4] had been instructed to carry out harassing operations in the rear of the enemy.

154. When the track to Silchar was cut, pressure had developed in the Bishenpur area; and 17 Indian Division (which was brought south again from its concentration area north of Imphal) was engaged, together with a brigade of 20 Indian Division, in very severe fighting. By the 27th April, the enemy had occupied six miles of the track; and was making desperate attempts to force our positions on the Tiddim and Tamu roads, which were the key approaches to Imphal. It was becoming clear that he considered it essential to capture the town before the monsoon set in.[5] These fierce attacks at the end of April and early in May cost the enemy very heavy casualties; and these combined with our land and air attacks on his communications, caused heavy gaps in his replacement programme. He managed, however, to bring up elements of other divisions, and was able to re-group his available forces by transferring units from one sector of the front to another.

155. The Imphal Plain was a large area to defend; there were only two all-weather airfields: one at Palel, the other in the outskirts of Imphal—both were in poor condition, and exposed to occasional shelling. It was essential that we should not be driven back at any point, since the least withdrawal would at once endanger these airfields, upon which the encircled 4 Corps relied for its supply. As it was, enemy infiltration was able to over-run part of our "warning" system and some of our advanced landing-grounds on

[1] Where I visited them and found them in great spirits.

[2] This division was one of the toughest we came up against; General Kimura subsequently said its commander (Lieut.-General Tanaka) had been his best.

[3] 33 Japanese Divisional Infantry Group, commanded by Major-General Yamamoto.

[4] See 'A', paragraph 72. As soon as 33 Corps Headquarters was established in Jorhat, the Lushai Brigade and 3 Commando Brigade had been put under Lieut.-General Stopford, though they were far from his Headquarters, in accordance with the plan that Lieut.-General Scoones should be left free to concentrate his attention on the forces attacking Imphal itself.

[5] In an Order of the Day issued at this time, the Commander of 33 Japanese Division said: "You will take Imphal, even if it means that the Division will be annihilated".

the edge of the Plain: as a consequence of which, the number of successful interceptions by our defensive fighters had been considerably reduced. Although the enemy attacks at this time were almost all unsuccessful, he was sufficiently close to cause considerable anxiety whenever he developed strong local pressure. Moreover, the surface at Palel airfield began to break up (partly owing to the heavy weight of the C-46s); and since it was also exposed to raids by small enemy ground parties, who destroyed a number of our aircraft on the ground, we were eventually reduced to the narrow strip at Imphal.

156. More than 4,000 sorties were flown in the month of April alone by Hurricane fighter-bombers and Vengeance (A-35) light bombers; the efforts of 221 Group[1] (reinforced by squadrons of 224 Group) being concentrated on 4 Corps at the beginning of the month, whilst later in the month and during May they were divided between the Imphal and Kohima battles. At the beginning of April, also, the Third T.A.F. concentrated on giving indirect support to 4 Corps; whilst later its main efforts were directed to carrying out attacks further afield, on land and river lines of communication, supply dumps and troop concentrations. The Strategic Air Force supplemented the work of the tactical squadrons, as it had in Arakan, by carrying out attacks against enemy transport and troop concentrations on the Tiddim road; and from the middle of April, also, Mitchells (B-25) and Wellingtons maintained an almost daily assault on the two motor roads, leading westward from Ye-U and Wuntho respectively, which were the main enemy lines of supply to this front. Between November, 1943, and May, 1944, the Japanese air forces, out of 2,700 sorties, had lost fourteen per cent. of their aircraft, while the British and U.S. air forces, out of an effort nearly thirty times as great, had lost less than one-third of one per cent.

157. Our successes in the air had a decisive effect on the battle during April and May: for we were in a position to aggravate, by widespread air attacks, the enemy's serious shortage of men and supplies; whereas we ourselves were increasingly able not only to carry out transport operations in the air unhampered by enemy interference, but also to move forward motor transport, tanks and marching troops in an unbroken stream, without taking the normal precautions against attack from the air.

158. Although this position was eminently satisfactory, and enabled us to concentrate our air effort increasingly on operations, I did not consider that the tactical land/air co-operation had reached the standard that would be necessary for an offensive. The land and air forces in S.E.A.C. were both still organised and deployed along the basically defensive lines which had been forced on them in 1942; and although the collapse of the Japanese offensive had enabled us successfully to undertake limited counter-offensive action, a re-adjustment from a fixed defensive to a mobile offensive basis would be essential for the large-scale counter-offensive which it was my intention to launch at the earliest opportunity.

159. A memorandum had been prepared by my staff, setting out the principles of land/air warfare and incorporating lessons learned from the North African campaign, as well as developments recently evolved in the United Kingdom, in preparation for the invasion of France. In June I approved this memorandum, and it was issued by the land and air Commanders-in-Chief in parallel to their subordinate formations. At the same time I appointed an Inter-Service Committee[2] which was to visit Burma, examine the situation on the spot, and make recommendations for improving land/air co-operation. The committee was instructed to confine its recommendations to the Arakan and Central fronts; since the organisation on the N.C.A.C. front had been independently designed to suit American methods, technique and temperament.

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On the N.C.A.C. front, Lieut.-General Stilwell's operations had been progressing,[3] though not as well as he had hoped; and throughout April the main body of his forces had been slowly making headway against strong opposition north of Kamaing. It had been intended to block, or clear, Mogaung before tackling Myitkyina; but in view of the slow rate of progress, it was decided not to wait for the fall of Mogaung, and preparations for the attack on Myitkyina were now put forward. A task force of U.S. and Chinese troops had been formed, of which the backbone was a Chinese regiment based on Dinjan, in Northern Assam, where it gave a sense of security to the airfield there, besides being well placed for the fly-in that was to follow the capture of the airfield at Myitkyina.

[1] The Headquarters of 221 Group, which was responsible for all close support on the Central front, had moved alongside that of 4 Corps at Imphal in December, 1943.

[2] Under my Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (Air), Air Vice-Marshal Whitworth-Jones.

[3] See Map 15 (facing page 60).

161. On the 17th May, columns of GALAHAD force and Chinese infantry[1] who, after an exhausting advance over the Kumon Range, had been carrying out an outflanking attack against Myitkyina itself, caught the enemy unawares and captured the airfield just as the monsoon was starting. The surprise achieved here was greatly helped by the action of a force of Kachin irregulars who, the day before the attack on the airfield, attacked and (for a short time) held Washang, about thirty miles to the east—thus distracting the enemy's attention from the more important operation against the airfield. Troop Carrier Command immediately flew in gliders and transport planes, carrying one U.S. airborne aviation engineer company, two batteries of U.S. anti-aircraft artillery, and two troops of light anti-aircraft gunners from Fourteenth Army. In this airborne operation, which was carried out by day and night under enemy ground fire and air attacks, on to a half-flooded airfield, only one Dakota was shot down and a few were destroyed on the ground. Two days after its capture the airfield was in operation, but it was overworked even after it had been reconstructed and expanded. To relieve the pressure, three more U.S. aviation engineer battalions were flown in, fully equipped, and five more all-weather airfields were built in the area. During their construction, the battalions were supplied entirely by air throughout the monsoon.

162. As soon as the airfield had been secured, the ground forces attacked the town, which they hoped to capture within two days. But they failed to do this, for three reasons. Firstly, the Japanese forces in Myitkyina, which had been estimated as being less than 1,000 turned out to be some 4,600; secondly, the 150th Regiment of 50 Chinese Division attacked from the south—which was the logical line of approach, but also, unfortunately, the easiest to defend. Thirdly, GALAHAD force was by this time but a shadow of its former self, for the unit had been reduced by sickness and other causes (after operating for a long time under very trying conditions[2]) to fewer than 100 of the original force. Neither of the two U.S. engineer combat squadrons with them had been trained for actual fighting; and the 1,000 replacements, who had joined them one week after arriving in Bombay, had not previously seen their officers, and had in the main been transferred from other branches, such as Quartermaster's and Ordnance. Counting the reinforcements flown in for this battle, there were some 9,000 combat troops attacking Myitkyina, which was defended by units of 18 Japanese Division, reinforced by troops from the surrounding countryside—and a siege which was to last 79 days now began.

163. By this time, Lieut.-General Stilwell had five Chinese divisions under his command;[3] and on the 17th May the Special Force (with the exception of 23 L.R.P. Brigade, which was still operating under 33 Corps) was transferred to his direct command, though it still remained (through him) under Lieut.-General Slim's operational control.[4] Throughout April and the beginning of May, the L.R.P. Brigades, supplied and supported by air[5], had carried out independent operations, inflicting considerable losses on the men and material of the enemy, and causing much disorganisation in his rear. They had destroyed many important dumps in the Railway Corridor (the road and railway to Mogaung) which they kept cut for 71 days; they had also cut the Bhamo–Myitkyina road, and destroyed important dumps and enemy lines of communication between Central Burma and the Chindwin; and had delayed the movement of reinforcements to the Central front.

164. The enemy had not detached troops from the Central front to deal with the Special Force: rightly appreciating that the battle was to be lost or won in Assam, he had continued to concentrate on his primary objective in the west, and had employed against the L.R.P. brigades in Central Burma only lines of communication troops and elements of divisions not allocated to the Assam offensive. But the forces gathered from these sources had proved insufficient to deal with the Special Force; and the enemy decided to bring in 53 Japanese Division from Malaya, rather than divert troops from the Central front. So in effect the Force had contained at least seventeen battalions.

165. Even when the Imphal and Kohima battles had been at their most critical stages, Lieut.-General Slim—with General Giffard's and my own full agreement—had decided against diverting the Special Force to the Central front; but had directed it to continue its main task of giving all possible assistance to Lieut.-General Stilwell. For the N.C.A.C. forces had been steadily advancing; and it was hoped that a conspicuous

[1] See 'B', paragraph 130.
[2] See 'B', paragraph 175 and its footnote.
[3] 14, 22, 30, 38 and 50 Chinese Divisions.
[4] 16 L.R.P. Brigade had been flown out (see 'B', paragraph 176): Lieut.-General Stilwell therefore commanded only four out of the original six brigades in the division—14 Brigade, 77 and 111 Indian Brigades and 3 West African Brigade.
[5] No. 1 Air Commando (See 'B,' paragraph 55) which had flown for longer than it had been organised to fly for, ceased to operate in mid-May; and after this all direct air support to the Special Force was provided by Northern Air Sector Force.




MAP 15. **N.C.A.C. OPERATIONS**

**APRIL 1—JUNE 30 1944**



NOTE: Broken Arrows indicate Line of Advance
Leading up to this Period.

victory in north-eastern Burma might induce the Generalissimo to send in the Expeditionary Force from Yunnan, and contribute to the campaign—in which case the Special Force would be suitably placed for harassing the communications of enemy forces opposing the Chinese advance.

166. In the third week of April, the Chinese Expeditionary Force was ordered by the Generalissimo to advance from Yunnan. The force, under a new Chinese Commander-in-Chief, General Wei Li-huang[1], consisted of about 200,000 men, divided into several formations. A U.S. Military Mission[2] was attached, to give advice on training and operations, and to arrange for equipping and supplying the force from American sources; while the British Military Mission, which had been re-organised by Brigadier A. T. Wilson-Brand, was instructed to start operating with the Chinese Expeditionary Force. It was planned that this force should cross the Salween; and, after clearing the enemy out of western Yunnan, should link up with Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces, and so establish land contact with India. The crossing of the Salween began on the night of the 10th/11th May, when 40,000 Chinese troops crossed in 400 rubber boats; the way having been prepared on the previous night by advance parties of infantry and engineers. Thousands more crossed on the night of the 11th/12th May; and this continued until the Chinese were across in sufficient force to exert considerable pressure on the Salween front from Hpimaw in the north to Kunlong in the south.

167. As a condition for the advance, the Generalissimo requested that we should furnish air-supply for his troops; although he had agreed, at Chungking in October, 1943, that the China theatre would be responsible for maintaining the Yunnan Force. But our own experience in Burma had shown that air-supply was the only way in which troops could be satisfactorily maintained when advancing through difficult country, such as that which the Yunnan Force was proposing to cross. It seemed reasonable, therefore, that this part of the contract should be revised; and since their air requirements per head were much lighter than those of other formations in Burma, I was able to inform the Generalissimo that sufficient transport aircraft would be provided to make a very limited day-to-day supply for four Chinese divisions possible.

168. Orders were issued on the 17th May for a U.S. squadron of 13 Dakotas to be diverted from Troop Carrier Command to 14th U.S.A.A.F. for the supply of the Yunnan Force. This decision was taken at a moment when the resources of Troop Carrier Command were strained to the utmost. But the squadron was temporarily replaced by an equivalent number of bomber aircraft from the Strategic Air Force, and Air Chief Marshal Peirse did not consider that bombing operations in support of 4 and 33 Corps would be materially affected, since another U.S. Medium Bomber Squadron was about to become operational and would fill the gap. In any case, however, I considered that a successful Chinese advance would greatly assist our general strategy; and I feared that, if his request were not met, the Generalissimo might cancel the operation.

169. It had been agreed at Chungking in October, 1943 (and again at the Cairo Conference in November), that the Chinese Expeditionary Force should be transferred to the South-East Asia Command as soon as it crossed the Burma border. But the border was loosely defined, and a situation would almost certainly arise in which part of the force was over the border, while part of it was still in China. I therefore considered that rigid adherence to the existing agreement might prevent efficient co-ordination; and I proposed that those elements of the Yunnan Force which were actually engaged in the advance should come under my command, through Lieut.-General Stilwell, on the 1st June. I instructed Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart on the 21st May to obtain the Generalissimo's views in this matter, and pressed for a very early answer.[3]

170. Another important problem which the advance of the Yunnan Force had raised was the one of inter-Command relationship. Lieut.-General Stilwell's N.C.A.C. forces and the Chinese Expeditionary Force from Yunnan were fighting for the same objective—the opening of a land route to China—and the advantages of a unified command under Lieut.-General Stilwell were therefore obvious. On the 19th May, General Giffard, in recommending this, pointed out that, under this arrangement, Lieut.-General Stilwell would be commanding a force that was virtually an army; and that it was logical that he should work parallel with Lieut.-General Slim, under the Army Group Commander-in-Chief's operational control. And since that part of the Yunnan Force which was about to advance into Burma would soon be coming under my command, while Lieut.-General Stilwell was the only operational commander under me who would be acceptable to the Generalissimo, General Giffard's suggestion seemed the obvious solution.

[1] See 'B,' paragraph 6 and its footnote.
[2] See Annexure 9 (page 265).
[3] The Generalissimo informed me, considerably later, that he did not agree to this; and it was not until the 11 Chinese Army Group crossed the border in January, 1945, that they came under my command.

171. On the 20th May, Lieut.-General Stilwell himself brought up this question, warning me that his forces would soon reach Kamaing and that he would then be released from the Cairo agreement,[1] by which he had temporarily been placed under the operational control of Lieut.-General Slim. I realised that in claiming to come directly under me, and not under a solely British commander, he was following not only the Generalissimo's wishes, but also his own strong feeling, that in his capacity as my Deputy, he was senior to General Giffard in the South-East Asia hierarchy. I consulted my senior American Staff Officers, Generals Wedemeyer and Wheeler, as to whether the difficulty of General Giffard's not being an Allied Commander could be overcome by creating him Commander-in-Chief of Allied Land Forces; but they assured me that this would be acceptable neither to the Generalissimo nor to Lieut.-General Stilwell. I told them that my Chief of Staff, Lieut.-General Pownall, whom I had sent to London the week before, had been instructed to take up with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff the whole matter of the appointment of one commander of all land forces, British, American and Chinese, in South-East Asia.

172. Lieut.-General Pownall had been instructed to draw the attention of the C.I.G.S. to the fact that my staff was not constituted to deal with specific land force problems on a Commander-in-Chief's level; nor did I consider it sound organisation that I should have to deal with more than one subordinate commander of land forces. He was therefore to press for the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land forces in South-East Asia. Lieut.-General Pownall had also been instructed to suggest that the C.I.G.S. should take up with General Marshall the question of appointing additional senior U.S. officers to fill some of the appointments at present held by Lieut.-General Stilwell; so that the latter should be free to concentrate in the China theatre his unique knowledge of China and Chinese affairs.

173. Towards the end of May and early in June, Lieut.-General Stilwell's forces began to close in on Kamaing, while 77 L.R.P. Brigade was investing Mogaung and the Fort Hertz detachments were pressing south from Sumprabum; as a result of which 18 Japanese Division was beginning to break up and become disorganised. In the south, the Special Force had established a road-and-rail block (BLACKPOOL) at Hopin, which it had succeeded in holding until the 25th May—almost annihilating a regiment of 53 Japanese Division in the process. But weather conditions, which prevented direct air support for these operations, had made BLACKPOOL untenable; for the enemy had been able to deploy anti-aircraft and ground artillery, which made the delivery of supplies by transport aircraft very difficult. The force therefore began to move north, one detachment, MORRISFORCE (consisting of DAHFORCE and part of 111 L.R.P. Brigade) moved up the Bhamo–Myitkyina road to support the Chinese divisions attacking Myitkyina; while the remaining four L.R.P. brigades moved against the Mogaung area. On the 16th June, 22 Chinese Division occupied Kamaing. At Lieut.-General Stilwell's insistence, I issued orders placing him and his forces directly under my operational command; and I now became virtually Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Land Forces.

174. Ten days after the fall of Kamaing, 77 L.R.P. Brigade (assisted by a regiment of 38 Chinese Division) completed the reduction of Mogaung. In spite of these reverses the remnants of 18 Japanese Division continued to resist strongly in the Mogaung–Kamaing–Myitkyina area. A Chinese/American task force was formed for the reduction of Myitkyina. This consisted of U.S. combat engineers and Chinese troops, supported by a British Bofors anti-aircraft unit. It also contained a reconstructed 5307 U.S. Provisional Infantry Regiment, built around a cadre of men from GALAHAD force; and two 75-mm. pack howitzers. But in spite of our superiority in numbers, and our strong air support, the Japanese garrison resisted fiercely, and little progress was made. The comparative slowness of progress on the N.C.A.C. front during the next phase of the campaign was, in my opinion, due partly to the lack of experience shown by the Chinese troops in siege tactics, and partly to the exhaustion and sickness of many of the troops engaged.[2]

175. Before the operations of the Long-Range Penetration Forces began, Major-General Wingate had told me that he considered the longest time a British or American L.R.P. force could operate effectively was two or three months; and I now learned that he had told the troops that they would be required for the fighting area for not more than two months at a time.[3] By now many men were in their fourth month of continuous fighting behind the enemy lines; on occasions they had been completely isolated for long periods, and able to evacuate the sick and wounded only after considerable delay.

[1] See 'A', paragraph 22.

[2] After the capture of Myitkyina airfield, those of these troops who were not absorbed into the task force had been evacuated.

[3] It appeared that Lieut.-General Stilwell had not, at this time, heard of this promise.

176. When Lieut.-General Stilwell took over the operational control of the Special Force on the 17th May, 16 L.R.P. Brigade (exhausted not so much by the fighting as by its long marches under bad conditions) had been flown out and special efforts were also being made to fly out casualties from the other brigades. Light inter-communication aircraft (L-1 and L-5) were used to carry casualties from small improvised jungle strips to the larger strips, from where transport aircraft carried them to hospitals in India. Since the approach of the monsoon often prevented evacuation by light aircraft, two Sunderland flying-boats were diverted, with Admiral Somerville's consent, from general reconnaissance in the Indian Ocean, and were used for evacuating casualties[1] from Lake Indawgyi in Central Burma on to the Brahmaputra at Chabua, in Northern Assam. I was anxious that the remainder of the Special Force, two brigades of which were now engaged in their eleventh week of fighting, should be withdrawn to keep faith with Major-General Wingate's promise; but I was unwilling to order it out, so long as Lieut.-General Stilwell considered it operationally vital that it should be kept in the field. The matter came to a head in an acute form at the end of May, when Lieut.-General Stilwell made a formal complaint to me about the withdrawal of the Force from the Hopin block.[2] He claimed that this had let the enemy in from the south, to the detriment of the situation at Myitkyina; and he asked that, if the position deteriorated further, British parachute troops should be put at his disposal. I could not grant this request, because our few available parachute troops were already committed on the Central front; but it seemed to me that Lieut.-General Stilwell was taking an unnecessarily alarmist view—and in fact the Japanese made no follow-up in the area from which the Special Force had withdrawn. However, I told General Giffard to give Lieut.-General Stilwell all possible assistance if the situation at Myitkyina became critical.

177. A few days later, Lieut.-General Stilwell complained to me that units of the Force had disobeyed his order to carry out an advance; and said that, since he no longer felt able to command the Force, he wished it to be withdrawn. These serious representations were made without reference to the commander, Major-General Lentaigne. After an official investigation with Lieut.-General Stilwell which I had instructed Lieut.-General Slim to undertake, the latter gave it as his opinion that none of Lieut.-General Stilwell's orders to the Force would have been unreasonable under normal conditions. He maintained, however, that the slowing-up of the advance had been due to casualties, bad weather, and the general state of the Force; and that the latter had, in fact, been ordered to undertake tasks for which it was no longer fit. Major-General Lentaigne reported that casualties from battle and disease were so high that it was not possible to evacuate the sick of any particular formation and reorganise the remainder, without withdrawing an entire column from the field, and this had never been possible, because Lieut.-General Stilwell had kept the columns continuously engaged.

178. There seemed no doubt that the Special Force had been over-taxed; and there was a strong case for withdrawing the remainder of it for rest and re-equipment before the post-monsoon operations. But Lieut.-General Stilwell said that he required them for the immediate battle; and that elements of the corresponding U.S. force, GALAHAD, which had operated under the same conditions, would in any case be taking part. I did not wish to prejudice the coming operations by withdrawing any troops considered to be absolutely necessary; and since relations between Lieut.-General Stilwell and Major-General Lentaigne were obviously strained, I decided to thrash out this matter with them personally, and met them both at their Headquarters at Shaduzup on the 30th June.

179. It was agreed that the two L.R.P. brigades which had been longest in the field should be medically examined: and troops who were unduly weak should be taken out at once and the remainder withdrawn as soon as the immediate tactical situation had cleared up. MORRISFORCE should remain in its positions to the south of Myitkyina until the town was taken (for at this time a long siege was not anticipated); while the remaining two brigades were to be withdrawn at a later date, depending on local conditions and the availability of replacements. Since all these troops would be required for post-monsoon operations, I emphasised the necessity to withdraw them for rest and re-fit as soon as the leading elements of 36 British Division[3] became available to replace them; and I recommended that the remaining elements of GALAHAD Force should be withdrawn at the same time; but my advice was not taken. I was sorry, but not surprised, when Lieut.-General Stilwell reported to me later that he had had trouble with them—and, with typical frankness, admitted that this was through their having been overtaxed.

[1] Flying under very difficult conditions, often at tree-top height, these two flying-boats evacuated more than 500 casualties.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 173.

[3] Which had left Arakan for Shillong, in Assam, to rest and re-fit before being transferred to Lieut.-General Stilwell's command.

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The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had sent a further directive to Lieut.-General Stilwell about the part which the China-based air forces were to play in the Pacific operations: asking him to supply details of the support he would be able to provide, what reinforcements he considered necessary, and how far he was relying on temporary transfers from the 10th U.S.A.A.F. When informing me of this on the 3rd May, the British Chiefs of Staff had asked me to estimate the effect which such a directive would have on future operations in South-East Asia. I replied that the effects would be considerable; and I set out in general terms what I thought they would be, but pointed out that I would be unable to make detailed comments until I knew the American plans for the C.B.I. theatre.

181. On the 11th May, I sent a summary of my views to the Chiefs of Staff, giving an estimate of how many of General Arnold's promised aircraft I should need and how they should be employed; and pointing out that the first essential was to transport the maximum amount of material to China, in good time to support the Pacific advance in early 1945. I submitted that, since I had already been told that land operations in Burma must be carried out with the land and air resources at present in the theatre (or else firmly allocated), it was difficult to make a detailed forecast; for our ability to advance naturally depended largely on the outcome of current operations. In stressing once again the urgent need for a new directive, so that planning could be continued on as firm a basis as the still uncertain result of current operations permitted, I urged that my new directive should be in fairly general terms, and should allow me a certain latitude to act in the light of changing conditions.

182. The capture of Myitkyina airfield had made our need for a new directive even more urgent. It was clear that our supply lines, by sea to India and overland to Assam, could not at the same time carry the stores and equipment necessary for the full development of both the air and land routes in 1944, as well as the stores for supporting full-scale operations on the Central and N.C.A.C. fronts. It was essential to know whether we were to establish an air-staging area at Myitkyina at once, so that the air-lift to China could be developed as far and as quickly as possible; or whether we were to concentrate on forcing through the road and pipe-lines across Upper Burma into China. It was urgent that a decision should be taken on this point, particularly as it was one on which Lieut.-General Stilwell's opinion and mine were at variance.

183. Air transport had already worked wonders. Large tonnages and considerable numbers of troops had been lifted; and the possibilities of further development depended only on aircraft reinforcements, and on new airfields from which to operate them. Considering the tonnage carried, the amount of stores and fuel required for air transport was very small; and the total of men, stores, and equipment required for building airfields and servicing the aircraft, was also small when compared with the amount of road-building machines, engineering material and troops which would be required for the road and pipe-line projects. If it were decided to cancel the latter and develop the air-route to the full, much-needed engineers and engineering equipment could be freed for the early construction of airfields; and this would achieve a substantial increase in tonnage to China at a much earlier date.

184. But if priority were given to the overland route, other needs would have to be curtailed in favour of the men and material required for building the road and maintaining it. Inroads were already being made on the transport of supplies vital to 4 and 33 Corps and to the 14th U.S.A.A.F.; and the longer the land-route grew, the greater the burden of maintaining it would become. On the other hand, certain items of equipment (such as heavy guns, tanks and large trucks) could only proceed by road or by sea; so that if the extension of the overland route were to be held up, the capture of a sea port would be necessary.

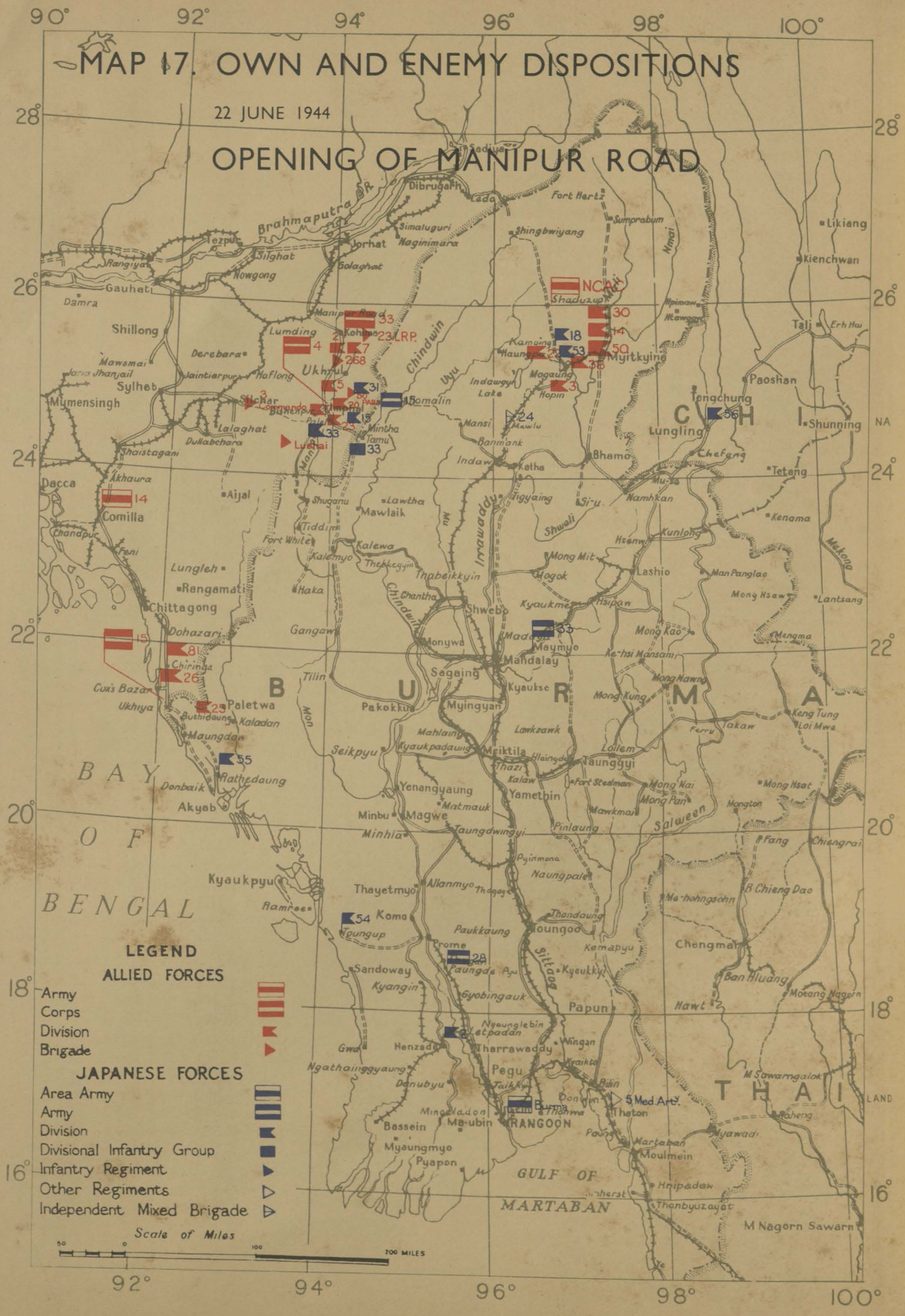
185. The long-awaited directive was issued to me on the 3rd June. The first part was the directive I had suggested on the 14th April:—

> "to develop, maintain, broaden, and protect the air link to China, in order to provide the maximum and timely stock of petrol and stores to China in support of Pacific operations".

but a further paragraph had been added:

> "So far as is consistent with the above, to press advantages against the enemy, by exerting maximum effort, ground and air, particularly during the current monsoon season, and in pressing such advantages to be prepared to exploit the development of overland communications to China. All these operations must be dictated by the forces at present available, or firmly allocated, to South-East Asia Command".


COUNTER-OFFENSIVE ON THE CENTRAL FRONT
MAY — JUNE 1944
MAP 16
INDIA
BURMA
Dimapur
23 LRP. BDE
Jessami
Kohima
Kharasom
Chindwin
2 DIV.
7 DIV.
Ukhrul
15 DIV.
31 DIV.
Kanglatongbi
5 DIV.
Uyu
20 DIV.
Silchar
Imphal
17 DIV.
3 COMMANDO BDE.
23 DIV.
Bishenpur
Palel
33 DIV.
33 DIV. INF. GROUP
ELEMENTS OF 15 DIV.
Tamu
Chindwin
VALLEY
LUSHAI
BDE.
Tonzang
KABAW
Tiddim
Fort White
Kaiewa
— KEY —
Allied Lines Of Advance
Japanese Withdrawals
Japanese Concentration Areas
Roads cut by the Japanese
Tracks cut by the Japanese
Miles 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 Miles




# MAP 17. OWN AND ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

22 JUNE 1944

## OPENING OF MANIPUR ROAD

186. In the light of this directive, and in accordance with my determination to use the land and air forces to the greatest possible extent during the monsoon, I issued new directives to my Commanders-in-Chief outlining their respective tasks and those of the Command in general (so far as these could be foreseen) and laying down various inter-Command adjustments which had now become necessary. On the 20th, these adjustments came into effect. The Land Forces Command was now divided between Lieut.-General Stilwell, who became Commanding-General, N.C.A.C., and General Giffard, who as Commander-in-Chief, 11 Army Group, controlled all the other land forces in South-East Asia (excepting those detachments of Fourteenth Army under the operational control of Lieut.-General Stilwell).

187. Air Chief Marshal Peirse was required to adjust existing Air Force arrangements so as to ensure that Major-General Stratemeyer's Allied air forces were best disposed to co-operate effectively with Lieut.-General Stilwell and General Giffard. The new arrangements, which were worked out and put into effect by Major-General Stratemeyer's Headquarters, involved the reconstitution of the 10th U.S.A.A.F.[1] which was transferred to the Assam area,[2] where it superseded and absorbed Northern Air Sector Force. It assumed responsibility for protecting Assam, the Myitkyina area and the air transport route to China, as well as for supporting the ground forces on the N.C.A.C. front. Otherwise there was little change, except that the component parts of Troop Carrier Command, which had been dissolved on the 4th June, were now divided between 10th U.S.A.A.F. and Third Tactical Air Force; and that a certain number of transport squadrons were put under the direct control of Headquarters, Eastern Air Command.

188. Major-General Stratemeyer had also prepared a detailed air plan to implement the directive which the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had sent to Lieut.-General Stilwell at the beginning of May.[3] This provided for the reinforcement of 14th U.S.A.A.F. in the China theatre, from 10th U.S.A.A.F. in S.E.A.C., so as to give increased weight to the air forces supporting future operations in the Pacific; and it was to be implemented in two phases. Firstly, a stockpile was to be built up in China by:—

(*a*) securing the Mogaung–Myitkyina area and preparing airfields and bases for the use of Air Transport Command;

(*b*) providing air bases in India, and increasing the strength of Air Transport Command, so that the total monthly air-lift to China could be built up to 29,000 tons by December;

(*c*) diverting a bomber group from 10th U.S.A.A.F. to Air Transport Command if the existing resources in transport aircraft were found inadequate for the build-up in (*b*)—this diversion to begin in July and continue, if necessary, until fifteen days before the planned assault on Formosa.

In the second phase Major-General Stratemeyer provided for the diversion from S.E.A.C. to the China theatre of the whole of the 10th U.S. Army Air Force heavy bomber group, two medium bomber groups, a substantial number of fighters, and a photographic reconnaissance squadron.

189. I informed the Chiefs of Staff that I was in full agreement with the plans for the first phase of this operation, and had already directed Lieut.-General Stilwell to take action for securing and developing the Mogaung–Myitkyina area, while 36 British Division was already earmarked to assist him in this. In so far as I was concerned with the second phase, however, I pointed out that if the ground forces in Burma were to be adequately supported we should need substantial air reinforcements to fill the gap created by the diversions from the 10th U.S.A.A.F.

190. It was now becoming possible to foresee along broad lines the nature and scope of future operations in the theatre; but it was still not possible to make firm and detailed plans for fighting during and after the monsoon. Experience had shown that formations designed specifically for airborne operations, or amphibious operations, only, were not an economical proposition: for it occasionally happened that only the wrong kind of formation was immediately available, and that if it became essential that an operation should go forward it could only do so if a formation were used in a role for which it was not suited. I had therefore approved, in May, a suggestion made by General Giffard, that a standard divisional organisation should be instituted, which would enable all land formations to undertake jungle and amphibious operations, or to be transported by air. On the Arakan front, I had hoped that it might still be possible, with the few landing-craft which were too worn out to return to Europe, to capture Akyab before the monsoon; but General Giffard considered this no longer feasible, now that 5 and 7 Indian Divisions, 36 British Division, and 3 Commando Brigade had all been withdrawn to

[1] Now under Major-General H. C. Davidson, U.S.A.A.F.

[2] Except for the U.S. 7th Bombardment Group which remained as the U.S. component of Strategic Air Force.

[3] See 'B', paragraph 180.

other fronts. Since there would be no advantage, once the monsoon started and the use of landing-craft was precluded, in continuing pressure with the extremely reduced forces that remained, I agreed that on this front—and on this front alone—the offensive should be postponed and monsoon dispositions taken up.

191. On the Central front,[1] the enemy had begun to weaken early in May, but there was not yet any sign of a general withdrawal. In the 33 Corps area, 2 British Division and 7 Indian Division,[2] supported by Vengeance (A-35) dive-bombers and Hurricane fighter-bombers, had advanced throughout May against the main enemy positions in the Kohima area, wearing down 31 Japanese Division; and had also undertaken outflanking marches through very difficult country to isolate and destroy other centres of resistance. In the 4 Corps area, 17 Indian Division had gone over to the attack: here, the enemy was to be closely engaged by one brigade, to the south of Bishenpur; while a flank and rear attack was also to be made west of the Tiddim road. This road was successfully cut; and the enemy, whom these simultaneous attacks took entirely by surprise, suffered heavy casualties; but the difficulty of the country prevented us from fully exploiting the situation.

192. Every division of 4 and 33 Corps was now counter-attacking. The enemy, apparently unperturbed by his failure to force a decision, continued to launch strong local attacks, which cost him heavy casualties but achieved very little. By the end of the month, after some of the fiercest and most costly fighting of the campaign, the first stage of our counter-offensive was completed: the enemy had been driven out of his key positions, and our forces were giving him no respite.[3] On the night of the 5th/6th June, the Aradura Spur, which covers the road two or three miles south of Kohima, was captured—and the battle of Kohima was at an end. 4 and 33 Corps now began to advance towards one another along the Kohima–Imphal road; and the opening of this road now became our main preoccupation—for it would not be possible to make detailed plans for further operations until land communication between Imphal and the north had been re-established, and the large number of transport aircraft which were supplying the Imphal garrison could be released for other tasks.

193. 33 Corps was advancing from the north, along three main lines: 2 British Division was on the road; 7 Indian Division on its eastern flank, and moving roughly parallel with it, was operating to cut the enemy's communications leading east (though owing to the dense jungle it was finding it difficult to keep level with 2 British Division). Further to the east elements of 23 L.R.P. Brigade were engaged in clearing Jessami and the country beyond, and other elements advanced southwards towards Ukhrul and, by cutting the Kharasom–Ukhrul track and other tracks to the south, successfully interfered with the enemy's communications. Steady progress was made, though it was slowed up by the enemy's stubborn resistance: the tanks, in particular, being hindered by minefields covered by enemy artillery.

194. 4 Corps was advancing from the south; but more slowly than 33 Corps, for the country was even more difficult and the enemy resistance stronger; 5 Indian Division nevertheless managed to retake Kanglatongbi by the first week in June. Lieut.-General Slim had told Lieut.-General Scoones that the division was not to advance north of Kangpokpi, as the risk of stringing it out along the road further than this was an unnecessary one to take, while 33 Corps was driving 31 Japanese Division south against 4 Corps; and while 15 Japanese Division, which was holding Ukhrul and the country east of the main road, was still in a position to conduct an offensive against Imphal. The air-supply system, which had given recurrent cause for anxiety, had been re-organised both on the ground and in the air. On the 1st May the activities of Troop Carrier Command had been co-ordinated with those of Third T.A.F. under the overall command of Air Marshal Baldwin. As a result of this re-organisation, supplies had been increased; but it had proved impossible to make up arrears, and the troops in the Imphal area remained on a reduced scale of rations. Flying was now restricted by the south-west monsoon to an extent which Air Command had rather under-estimated in the original programme. Moreover, the inadequacy of the landing facilities in the Imphal area prevented us from making the best use of the aircraft available.

195. In the monsoon, only all-weather strips could be used; and it was becoming difficult to maintain the only two which came in this category in the Imphal Plain (at Palel, and at Imphal itself) in view of the wear and tear that constant landings and take-offs were inflicting on surfaces originally intended as fighter-strips. Both airfields were under intermittent shellfire; and Palel was occasionally raided by parties of Japanese infantry, who destroyed a number of

[1] See Map 16 (facing page 64).

[2] Two brigades of its own and one brigade of 5 Indian Division under command.

[3] Indeed, between November, 1943, and June, 1944, we had inflicted some 100,000 casualties, of which the Fourteenth Army were responsible for about 65,000.

aircraft and compelled us for a time to abandon the airfield altogether. Unloading was handicapped by the small number of hard-standings; and the congestion on both airfields was such that aircraft often had to circle for as long as one hour before being able to land—and sometimes had to return to base still loaded up. Sometimes supplies were not available at the operating base; and sometimes the loading parties on the despatching airfields (who, in common with other troops in the area, had for nearly two months been on reduced rations) were unable to keep pace with the number of aircraft which needed loading. Bomber aircraft of the Strategic Air Force had already been diverted to transport work, but the position was still deteriorating: the troops were beginning to use their reserves, and these were not being replaced.

196. It was now calculated that if the rate of air-supply could not be increased 4 Corps was likely to run out of essential supplies and certain types of ammunition by the first week in July. On the 8th June, I urged that everything possible should be done to improve the air-lift, and called for an all-out effort to open the Imphal–Kohima road. In the next two weeks, the lift of supplies by air steadily improved, and the gap between 33 Corps and 4 Corps was steadily closing.[1] On the 22nd June, 2 British Division and 5 Indian Division met—29 miles from Imphal and 109 miles from Dimapur—and the Kohima–Imphal road was re-opened. Convoys for the relief of Imphal had been loaded in readiness, and were sent in immediately behind the leading troops.

[1] See Map 17 (facing page 65).

# SYNOPSIS

## B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

### SECTION FOUR: JULY TO NOVEMBER 1944

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15 and 31 Japanese Divisions in full flight; Difficulties of the monsoon campaign; Plan to cross the Chindwin and fight in the Shwebo–Mandalay Plain; Two-pronged thrust down the Tiddim Road and the Kabaw Valley, to converge at Kalemyo; Imphal–Kohima area finally cleared; Myitkyina reduced after 79 days' siege; 36 British Division takes over from the Special Force.

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Request for early receipt of the four promised Combat Cargo Groups; Chiefs of Staff ask for fuller justification for this request; Plans submitted for Operations CAPITAL and DRACULA; Visit to London to discuss these plans and future strategy; Chiefs of Staff consult U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; Proposal for a Commander-in-Chief of Allied Land Forces considered; Return to Kandy; Report of Whitworth-Jones Committee presented; Planning reorganised, and Joint Planning Staff set up.

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Operations planned to clear Arakan (ROMULUS) and to capture Akyab (TALON) in support of coming operations in Central Burma; Lieut.-General Stilwell re-groups N.C.A.C. forces for a three-pronged thrust to the Irrawaddy; MARS Brigade formed; Bhamo surrounded; Two-pronged thrust converges at Kalemyo.

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Future S.E.A.C. strategy discussed at Second Quebec Conference; Directive received for CAPITAL and DRACULA from the Combined Chiefs of Staff; Visit to Cairo for discussions with the Prime Minister; Plans for assault on the Kra Isthmus as the first step to Singapore; General Stilwell is recalled from China; Reorganisation of the C.B.I. theatre; Combined Chiefs of Staff approve appointment of C.-in-C., Allied Land Forces; A.L.F.S.E.A. set up under Lieut.-General Leese; Air Forces and Army/Air supply system also reorganised.

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Fleet operations during 1944.

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Long-range Air operations during 1944.

The Japanese defeat on the Imphal Plain marked the end of the last offensive that the enemy was to attempt in Burma, and the final failure of his Invasion of India on which he had staked so much. Lieut.-General Mutaguchi (who was subsequently removed from his appointment) had issued an Order of the Day to the Fifteenth Japanese Army, which had undertaken the main operation, assuring the troops that they had now reached the stage of invincibility, and that the day when the Rising Sun would proclaim definite victory in India was not far off. The people of India, he told them, who had for years been awaiting their delivery at Japanese hands, would lend their co-operation, since India was inextricably bound up with the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere". Reminding them that a speedy and successful advance was the keynote of the operation, and that all the hardships they had endured in the past six months had been in preparation for this, he urged his troops to sweep aside the paltry opposition they would encounter and add lustre to Army tradition by achieving a victory of annihilation.

198. When Phase 1 of the invasion began, Lieut.-General Sakurai had been so sure of reaching Chittagong in ten days that, even while his troops were being held, enemy radio propaganda had continued its pre-arranged broadcasts announcing progress towards New Delhi. But the enemy's confidence that we could be beaten by a swift advance, during which he would be able to over-run our supplies and therefore did not need to bring up sufficient of his own, had not taken into account the fact that we would be able to supply 7 Indian Division by air, and that the division would therefore be able to continue to resist. But in Phase 2, he had proceeded to commit in Assam the same errors of judgment which had led to his defeat in Arakan, where the tide had first turned against him.

199. For on the Central front he had encircled not merely a part of one division, but the whole of 4 Corps: cutting off its only land lines of communication—but evidently without realising that we were in a position to supply an entire Corps by air. And once again, he had cut off our forces from their supplies without himself capturing any; moreover, without having made sure that his own troops would be sufficiently well provided, for them to be independent of captured supplies. When his original plan had broken down, the enemy's attempts to improvise had been frustrated by continuous air offensives against his rear supply-lines, dumps and troop concentrations, and by the operations of the L.R.P. brigades behind his lines.

200. When his plan for Phase 2 began to miscarry, the enemy showed a fatal lack of resiliency and failed to switch from his first objective, the capture of Kohima, to his second, the capture of Dimapur. If he had transferred his efforts to Dimapur without delay, he might still have won a considerable success, since we would not have been able to move up sufficient forces in time to protect the widely-scattered dumps in the area. Having re-supplied at Dimapur, the enemy could have proceeded to cut the Imphal road there just as effectively as at Kohima; at Dimapur, moreover, he would have been in a position to cut the whole Assam line of communication and to stop supplies from reaching the air bases for the Hump route. But the commander of 31 Japanese Division[1] had continued his fruitless assaults on Kohima until he had lost (on the subsequent admission of the Japanese themselves) some 4,000 men in the area of the town alone.

201. The total of enemy casualties in the battles of the Imphal Plain is not known, even to the Japanese themselves; but the three Japanese divisions and the I.N.A. Division all suffered very severely. 13,500 dead were counted on the battlefields; but these included neither losses by air actions, nor the wounded (of whom the greater part must have died), nor those who died of disease and hunger. At a conservative estimate, it may be said that the enemy lost 30,000 men between mid-March and mid-June;[2] and among a large amount of equipment we captured were nearly 100 guns. The defeat of the Fifteenth Japanese Army was resulting in a disorderly withdrawal under monsoon conditions—a contingency for which the Japanese had made no allowance. Having expected that we would obey the rules and stop fighting during the monsoon, when *he* stopped, the enemy had hoped to bring in reinforcements and rehabilitate the Fifteenth Japanese Army to meet our post-monsoon offensive.

[1] Lieut.-General Sato.

[2] Our own losses between the 4th March and 17th June totalled 2,669 killed and fewer than 10,000 wounded and missing.

202. Japanese reinforcements were arriving at the rate of 6,000 a month; and if we had not harried and pursued 15 and 31 Japanese Divisions throughout the monsoon they could have been rallied and re-formed with 33 Japanese Division (which had already been reinforced and was putting up stiff resistance). But monsoon conditions imposed a heavy strain on our troops, particularly on the administrative, engineer, and medical services; and as there was no pause in the campaign there could be no relaxation of air-supply, although our troops drew further and further away from the base airfields and increasingly operated in country where no landing-strips could be prepared. From July until November, our troops were to fight their way eastward and southward to the Chindwin, continuously supplied with munitions and food by the transport squadrons; while the close-support squadrons never failed them, and bomber and long-range fighters, ranging behind the enemy lines, prevented the Japanese from either conducting a successful withdrawal or organising a firm line of defence.

203. Our first objective was the crossing of the Chindwin, so that the Burma Area Army could be brought to battle on the Shwebo–Mandalay plain of Central Burma, where our tanks and mobile infantry could be used to the greatest advantage. On our way to the Chindwin, our object would be not so much to occupy towns or particular areas, but to destroy the Japanese Army wherever it could be found. Linked with this object was that of drawing away the Thirty-third Japanese Army from the north by the threat of being cut off from their supply bases in the south if their Fifteenth Army were defeated in Central Burma. It was therefore no mere diversion that 4 and 33 Corps were now to carry out, but a major battle which was calculated to give the maximum assistance to Lieut.-General Stilwell's advance.

204. Although our troops were to be supplied mainly from the air, it was over roads and tracks that they would have to march and fight. There were only two roads leading to the Chindwin[1]—and the word "roads" is an overstatement, when applied to some of the trails of thick mud over which the troops had to advance. These were:—

(*i*) Imphal–Palel–Tamu–Sittaung: The Palel–Tamu sector was never good, and when the monsoon started, rapidly deteriorated into a sea of mud. Under these conditions it was only possible for four-wheel-drive lorries and certain specialist vehicles to run beyond Palel. East of Tamu the road became a track, passable only for jeeps and four-wheel-drive vehicles as far as the Yu River, where it was necessary to establish a ferry, beyond which only pack and porter transport could go.

(*ii*) Imphal–Tiddim–Kalemyo–Kalewa: Though 4 Corps engineers had been working continuously on this road before the Japanese attacked in March, it was still incomplete, being roughly metalled as far as Churachandpur, from which point it was almost entirely unmetalled. On leaving the plain it ran almost entirely along mountain-sides (varying in height from 2,000 feet at the crossing of the Manipur River to 8,500 feet near Kennedy Peak), with a precipitous drop on one side and sheer cliff on the other. In the monsoon, rain poured in torrents down the jungle-covered slopes, washed away large sectors of the road and turned others into muddy slopes, up and down which, when not completely bogged, vehicles slid as best they could.

There was also a road (little more than a track) connecting Tamu with Kalemyo—thus providing an alternative route from Imphal to Kalewa, via Indainggyi. During the rains this track was deep in mud, varying from six to eighteen inches. In certain sectors the engineers had to build corduroy roads (i.e., planks tied together and laid crosswise), over which jeeps and 30-cwt. six-wheel-drive lorries could pass with difficulty.

205. On the 9th June, I had given General Giffard the following detailed tasks in regard to the Central front:—

(*a*) to re-establish communication on the road Dimapur–Kohima–Imphal not later than mid-July;

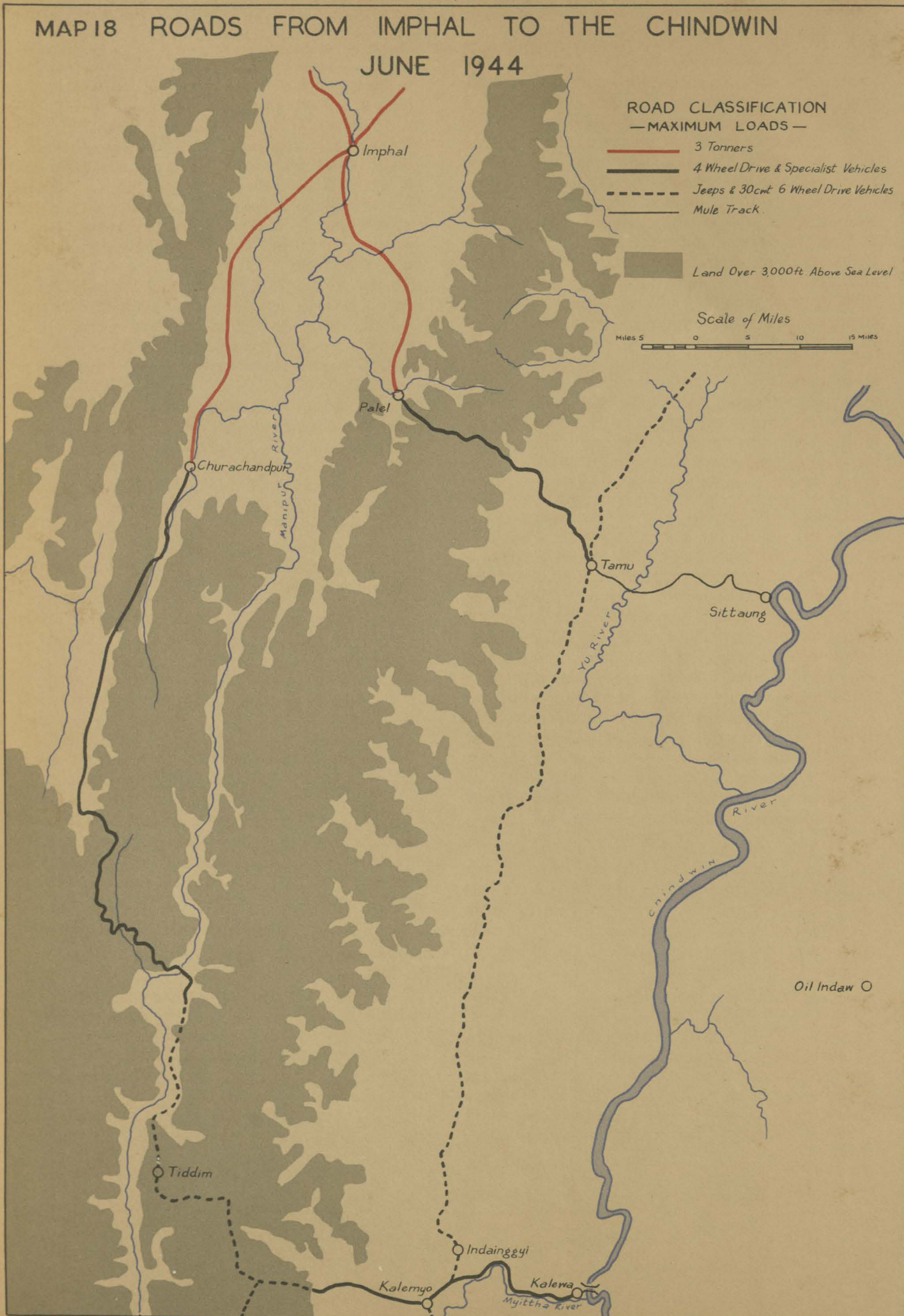
(*b*) to clear Japanese forces from the area Dimapur–Kohima–Imphal Plain–Yuwa–Tamanthi; and

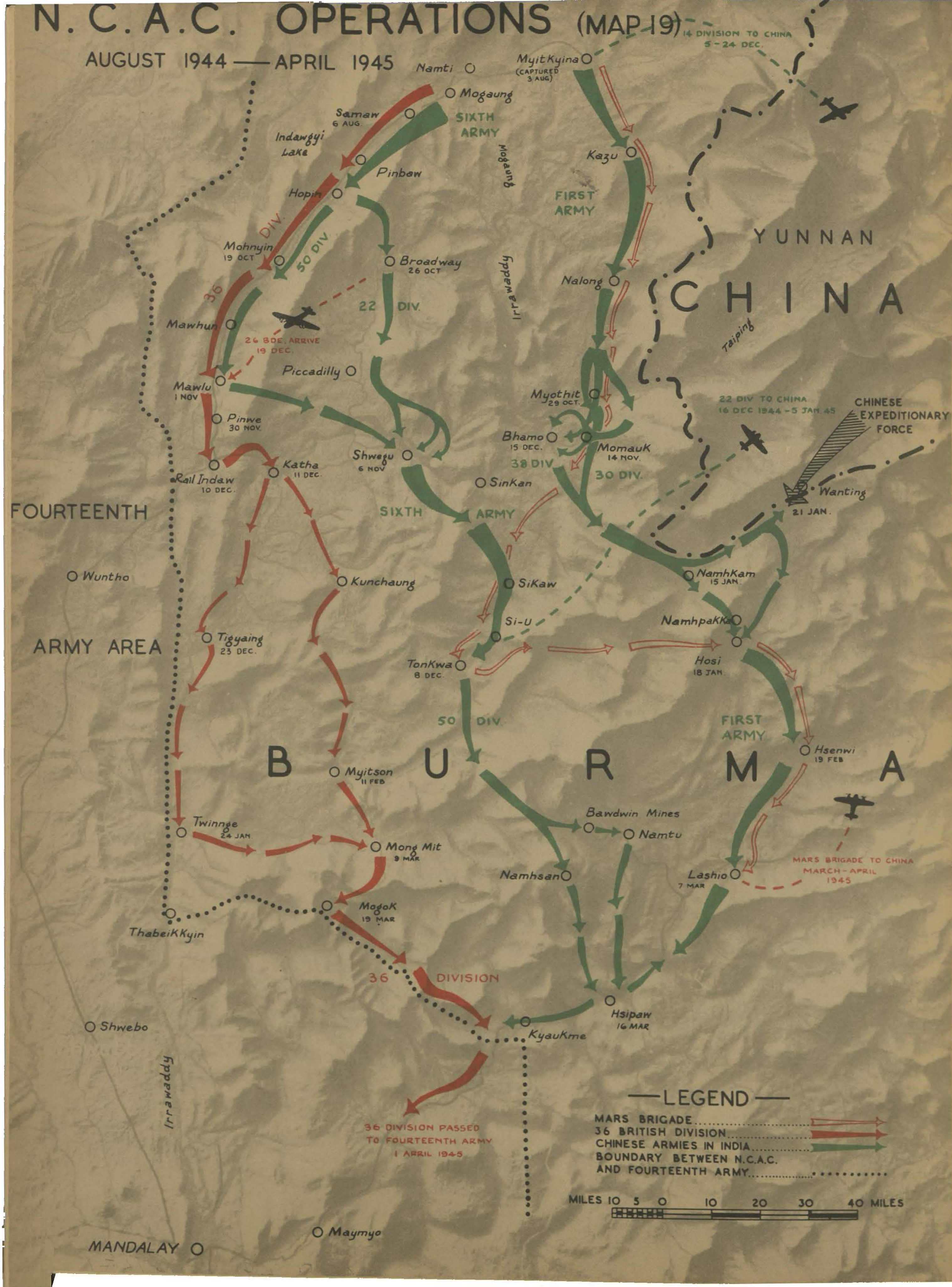
(*c*) to prepare to exploit across the Chindwin in the Yuwa–Tamanthi area after the monsoon.

When the first of these tasks had been completed on the 22nd June, it became possible once more to supply Imphal by land and to concentrate all available resources, including transport aircraft, on carrying out the other two.

206. After the fall of Imphal, Lieut.-General Slim had decided to re-group his formations. 4 Corps, with Headquarters at Imphal, now consisted of 5 and 17 Indian Divisions. 33 Corps consisted of 2 British Division, 7 and 23 Indian Divisions, 20 Indian Division (with 50 Parachute Brigade under command), 23 L.R.P. Brigade, 254 Indian Tank Brigade, and 3 Commando Brigade. At this time 33 Corps also included an *ad hoc* formation, known as 21 Indian Division, which had been set up at Kohima when the road was reopened, and was responsible for the local

[1] See Map 18.


MAP 18 ROADS FROM IMPHAL TO THE CHINDWIN
JUNE 1944
ROAD CLASSIFICATION
—MAXIMUM LOADS—
3 Tonners
4 Wheel Drive & Specialist Vehicles
Jeeps & 30cwt 6 Wheel Drive Vehicles
Mule Track
Land Over 3,000ft Above Sea Level
Scale of Miles
Miles 5
0
5
10
15 Miles
Imphal
Palel
Churachandpur
Manipur River
Tamu
Sittaung
Yu River
Chindwin River
Oil Indaw
Tiddim
Indainggyi
Kalemyo
Kalewa
Myittha River



N.C.A.C. OPERATIONS (MAP 19)
AUGUST 1944 — APRIL 1945
14 DIVISION TO CHINA 5 - 24 DEC.
Myitkyina (CAPTURED 3 AUG)
Namti
Mogaung
Samaw 6 AUG.
SIXTH ARMY
Indawgyi Lake
Pinbaw
Mogaung
Kazu
Hopin
FIRST ARMY
YUNNAN
Mohnyin 19 OCT
50 DIV
36 DIV.
Broadway 26 OCT
22 DIV.
Irrawaddy
Nalong
CHINA
Mawhun
26 BDE. ARRIVE 19 DEC.
Taiping
Piccadilly
Mawlu 1 NOV
Myothit 29 OCT.
22 DIV TO CHINA 16 DEC 1944 - 5 JAN. 45
CHINESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Pinwe 30 NOV.
Bhamo 15 DEC.
Momauk 14 NOV.
Shwegu 6 NOV
38 DIV
30 DIV.
Rail Indaw 10 DEC.
Katha 11 DEC.
SinKan
Wanting
21 JAN.
FOURTEENTH
SIXTH ARMY
Wuntho
Kunchaung
SiKaw
NamhKam 15 JAN.
NamhpaKKa
Si-U
ARMY AREA
Tigyaing 23 DEC.
TonKwa 8 DEC.
Hosi 18 JAN.
50 DIV.
FIRST ARMY
Hsenwi 19 FEB
B U R M A
Myitson 11 FEB
Bawdwin Mines
Namtu
Twinnge 24 JAN.
Mong Mit 9 MAR
Namhsan
Lashio 7 MAR
MARS BRIGADE TO CHINA MARCH - APRIL 1945
MogoK 19 MAR
ThabeiKKyin
36 DIVISION
Hsipaw 16 MAR
Shwebo
KyauKme
Irrawaddy
36 DIVISION PASSED TO FOURTEENTH ARMY 1 APRIL 1945
— LEGEND —
MARS BRIGADE
36 BRITISH DIVISION
CHINESE ARMIES IN INDIA
BOUNDARY BETWEEN N.C.A.C. AND FOURTEENTH ARMY
MILES 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 MILES
Maymyo
MANDALAY

defence of the Kohima area including the road for several miles south. (This division at first consisted of 268 Indian Infantry Brigade, with an armoured squadron and two garrison infantry battalions; but when a static Sub-Area command was formed at Kohima in the middle of July, most of 268 Brigade was withdrawn to fight around Tamu, and the remainder of the division was disbanded on the 5th August.) Under Fourteenth Army was the Lushai Brigade.

207. 4 and 33 Corps, supported by 221 Group, were ordered to pursue the Fifteenth Japanese Army without respite, in two main thrusts southward, which were to join up at Kalemyo: 4 Corps down the Tiddim road, to break up 33 Japanese Division; and 33 Corps down the Kabaw Valley, recapturing Tamu and driving the remnants of 15 and 31 Japanese Divisions across the Chindwin. Meanwhile, on the 3rd July, 7 Indian Division had broken into Ukhrul from the west, while a column of 23 L.R.P. Brigade entered the village almost simultaneously from the east. For a few days the enemy had continued to hold out strongly in positions north, south and west of the village; but these were quickly liquidated, and by the 10th July all resistance in the area had ceased. The securing of Ukhrul was most important, since it was the focal point of all communications in the area, and its capture removed all threats to Imphal from the north and north-east.

208. 4 Corps had also cleared the area north of the Silchar–Bishenpur track, where Hurricane fighters and fighter-bombers attacked vehicles trying to escape down the Tiddim road, and Lightnings (P-38) and Vengeances (A-35) blocked the road at several points by causing land-slides and destroying bridges. But 33 Japanese Division had always shown high fighting qualities; and now, reinforced by tanks and a composite regiment, it resisted strongly and effectively until the middle of July. The combined pressure of 5 and 17 Indian Divisions, however, together with that of the air forces (which included two squadrons of the Royal Indian Air Force) gradually turned the scale; many positions were being evacuated in the face of our continual frontal and flank attacks, often even as a result of air attack alone—and by the end of the month the enemy was in full retreat southward, and was abandoning much equipment.

209. Strafed from the air, harried on the ground, reduced by starvation and disease,[1] with casualties mounting daily; the Japanese provided excellent targets for our tactical support squadrons, who took full advantage of their opportunities. Hurricanes, Spitfires, Beaufighters, Lightnings (P-38), Thunderbolts (P-47), and Mosquitos were in action by day, attacking the enemy's troops and transport with rocket projectiles, bombs, 40-mm. cannon and guns of lesser calibre; while Mitchells (B-25) continued the bombing at night. (The Hurricane, with or without bombs, was the backbone of British direct air support. The pilots developed great accuracy in pin-point bombing, sometimes within only a few yards of our own positions. This was of the greatest help, since the divisions which were being wholly supplied by air were often very short of artillery ammunition.)

210. During the remainder of July, 4 Corps continued to advance down the Tiddim road, in spite of destroyed bridges, minefields, booby-traps, and the continual heavy rains, which turned every stream into a serious obstacle and made the deployment of wheeled and tracked vehicles off the road almost impossible. But by the end of the month[2], the enemy had been completely driven out of the southern approach to the Imphal Plain, and had suffered considerable losses in men and material, including 21 tanks. In the meantime, 33 Corps had also been operating successfully in its area east of Imphal and the Manipur road. After the fall of Ukhrul, a strong Japanese force had held out on the Ukhrul–Imphal road, but by the 14th July it had been encircled and wiped out, and all its guns and transport captured: the clearance of the Ukhrul area was now complete.

211. 50 Indian Parachute Brigade, which had taken part in this operation, was now withdrawn to India; and in the third week of July, 23 L.R.P. Brigade followed it, having completed its task of cutting the tracks leading east and south-east towards the Chindwin. Its long-range penetration technique had proved equally good for the short-range penetration operations which this brigade had had to undertake; and its special training and equipment had enabled it to operate effectively in country where ordinary infantry would have been at a great disadvantage. 23 L.R.P. Brigade, which had marched and fought over extremely difficult country since the beginning of April, had destroyed many of the enemy, while itself suffering only very light casualties; its contribution to the battle had been out of all proportion to its size.

[1] Lieut.-General Tanaka, who commanded 33 Japanese Division, has given a vivid picture of the chaos into which the enemy's supply arrangements fell at this time. For many weeks he himself was living on roots, while many of his troops died from starvation.

[2] On 31st July, 4 Corps H.Q. was withdrawn to India for rest and for training in mobile operations. Its formations on the Tiddim road passed under the command of H.Q. 33 Corps, which now became responsible for all operations to drive the Japanese back across the Chindwin.

212. Now that the main body of our forces around Ukhrul had been withdrawn, the centre of interest switched to the Tamu sector, where the enemy was being driven from his strongly-prepared position north of the Palel–Tamu road. In this sector, he continued to stage small counter-attacks; but although on several occasions he hit back sharply, his power of resistance was gradually decreasing, and he was beginning to withdraw more rapidly—abandoning much heavy equipment, including guns. By the middle of the month, the enemy had lost all initiative; and the decline of morale in this sector can be judged from the fact that, whereas practically no prisoners had been taken among the enemy during the first two years of war in South-East Asia, more than 100 were now taken in one week.

213. Towards the end of July, 33 Corps made steady progress down the road to Tamu; and on 4th August the town was entered by a brigade of 2 British Division. It was found to be in a state of indescribable confusion: the enemy had left behind the wounded, sick, and dying; and unburied corpses lay among abandoned guns, tanks, and vehicles. The possession of Tamu was important to us, for it gave us command of the entrance to the Kabaw Valley, as well as access to the tracks which led east to Sittaung and south to Kalemyo. It also enabled us to re-occupy a radar site which added approximately 100 miles of warning to the Imphal Valley; as well as providing an invaluable airstrip into which a Wing Headquarters and two squadrons moved almost immediately. By the beginning of August, consequently, we dominated all important lines of access to the Chindwin.

214. On the Arakan front, in the meantime, 15 Corps had been undertaking such local offensive actions as the weather made possible, from the monsoon positions which I had authorised it to take up, on the general line Godusara–The Tunnels–Taung Bazaar. These positions (situated mainly on higher ground, away from malarial areas that we had not yet brought under control) were chosen partly with a view to administration and supply, partly to economise forces, and partly for tactical reasons. (By pulling back from Buthidaung, for instance, which was of little value to us during the monsoon but would have been difficult to retain, it had been possible to withdraw two additional brigades for rest and refit.)

215. 25 Indian Division held positions up to, and including, The Tunnels and the important 551 feature,[1] 26 Indian Division was withdrawn into reserve into the Cox's Bazaar–Taungbro area, and 81 West African Division was withdrawn to rest at Chiringa. In my directive of the 9th June, I had ordered General Giffard, so far as the Arakan front was concerned, to:—

> "maintain an active defence on the general line Maungdaw–Tunnels area–Taung Bazaar during the monsoon, and prepare to capture Akyab by an advance starting as early as possible in the next dry season".

In June and July, 15 Corps operations were confined almost entirely to patrolling and small actions, in almost all of which our troops gained the advantage. These operations were carried out under great difficulty, the rainfall often exceeding 20 inches in one week.

216. On the N.C.A.C. front, the Chinese-American task force investing Myitkyina had continued to make slow progress against the defenders of the town, during June and July; and clearing operations had continued in the Mogaung area. Myitkyina was resisting with great stubbornness; but after the capture of Mogaung we had been able to prevent the passage of supplies by way of the "Railway Corridor", and the garrison had been forced to rely on what little they could infiltrate through our lines, or float down the river from where there were still detached Japanese forces to the north and north-east of the town.

217. On the 3rd August, Myitkyina fell, and the siege which had begun on the capture of the airfield came to an end. We now firmly held the whole Myitkyina region, and could consolidate our possession of the valuable airfield area, which not only provided a staging-post on the air route to China,[2] but also a forward base for land operations on this front. Preparations were now made for a general offensive southward. Leading elements of 36 British Division, which had come under Lieut.-General Stilwell's command on the 7th July, arrived at Mogaung to relieve the Special Force; and concentrated for an offensive down the Railway Corridor.

218. During August, the withdrawal of Special Force from operations was completed. Major-General Wingate's technique for jungle fighting with air support and supply, had suffered from certain limitations. These lightly-armed troops, divided as they were into small columns, had not been suitably equipped to undertake large-scale operations against fully-

[1] Which overlooked the approach to Buthidaung and had been captured on the 3rd May by 26 Indian Division after long and fierce fighting.

[2] Between May and October 14,000 landings were made at Myitkyina by transport aircraft carrying over 40,000 tons of troops, arms and supplies.

organised troops; and the considerable contribution which the Force as a whole had made to the general campaign would have been greater if it could have been made in co-ordination with normal formations—as in the case of 23 L.R.P. Brigade. But the Japanese offensive on the Central front had made it impossible to reinforce the Special Force around Indaw, either by flying in more troops, or by an offensive across the Chindwin. Its officers and men had fought bravely and successfully under very difficult conditions; they had killed and counted more than 5,400 Japanese, and had taken 86 prisoners—their own casualties being 1,034 killed, 2,531 wounded, and 473 missing. Of a total of 7,217 admissions to hospital, 75 per cent. had been for various forms of sickness; but even this hardly represents the real incidence, for many men had continued to march and fight even after falling sick or being wounded. Medical examinations of the men, on their withdrawal, showed that more than 50 per cent. were unfit for active service.

¤ ¤

I had ordered planning to be carried on during June on the assumption that 4 and 33 Corps were about to inflict a decisive defeat on the Japanese divisions opposing them. That defeat had now been inflicted; and in addition, the Mogaung–Myitkyina area was being rapidly cleared. In addition to the maintenance of 36 British Division and an offensive by Fourteenth Army across the Chindwin (which, if it was to be effective, would have to be independent of overland lines of communication), our plans envisaged extensive airborne operations against Central or Southern Burma, for which all four of the Combat Cargo Groups promised by General Arnold would be needed. For although the first Group was due to arrive on the 1st July, and the second had already been allocated to South-East Asia, I was not satisfied that these would provide a sufficient force of transport aircraft.

220. On the 16th June, therefore, I urged that all four Groups should be sent to the theatre: the second being made operational by the 1st September, the third by the 1st October, and the fourth by the 1st December. I also appealed personally to General Arnold to allow the original allocation to stand. On the 24th, I was informed by the British Chiefs of Staff that, since the offer of Combat Cargo Groups had been conditional, and the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had stipulated a maximum of two Groups,[1] I should have to submit a fuller operational background than I had already given, if the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff were to be satisfied that our plans warranted the allocation of all four Groups. Plans for a large-scale offensive in the next dry season, to carry out the second part of my new directive, had therefore now to be considered in the light of this decision.

221. Two main alternative plans were produced: either of which was designed, by taking calculated administrative risks, to complete the re-conquest of Northern Burma. Both envisaged an overland advance supported by air operations; and air transport, which would be used on a greater scale than ever before, would in the later stages, carry by far the largest part of the Army's supplies during the advance. The alternative plans considered were:—

*Plan 'X'*: an overland advance by N.C.A.C. forces, supported by 10th U.S.A.A.F., from the Mogaung–Myitkyina area to Katha and Bhamo. This would be co-ordinated with an advance by 4 and 33 Corps supported by 221 Group R.A.F., from Imphal to the Chindwin; and with an airborne operation against the Wuntho area. By these operations it was proposed to occupy Northern Burma down to a line Kalewa–Lashio;

*Plan 'Y'*: an offensive across the Chindwin by 4 and 33 Corps, supported by 221 Group R.A.F.; so as to deploy our armour against the enemy in the Ye-U–Shwebo area, and subsequently to exploit to Mandalay. Airborne troops were to seize Kalewa, and a second landing was to be made at the entrance to the Mandalay Plain; while N.C.A.C. troops and the Yunnan Force, supported by 10th and 14th U.S.A.A.F. respectively, were to undertake a complementary advance southward.

222. The re-conquest of Burma promised to be a long, arduous enterprise; and it seemed that it might be necessary to make an amphibious assault on Rangoon: this would not only clear the enemy out of Southern Burma, but would also enable our forces, when they had cut the main Japanese lines of communication, to advance northward overland and link up with 4 and 33 Corps, who would be driving the enemy southward. A plan was therefore also made, with the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, to recapture the Rangoon area by a combined airborne and seaborne assault; although such an operation would not fall strictly within the terms of my directive and could not be mounted with our available resources.

223. Lieut.-General Stilwell at the same time put forward a plan for land and air operations in Northern Burma, as an alternative to plans 'X' and 'Y'. (He was not in favour of the amphibious operation, in any

[1] Eventually I was allotted three out of the expected four; the fourth was sent to General MacArthur.

case, because it would open another front and would take resources away from the opening of overland communications to China.) Lieut.-General Stilwell's plan was that 4 and 33 Corps should advance towards the Shwebo–Mandalay area, while N.C.A.C. forces, profiting by this diversion, occupied Bhamo and launched an airborne operation to capture Lashio.

224. I decided to recommend plan 'Y' (CAPITAL), and also the seaborne and airborne attack on the Rangoon area (DRACULA); and on the 23rd July I sent details of both these for consideration by the Chiefs of Staff, with an appreciation of their relative merits. The appreciation made the following points:—

(*a*) both plans ultimately committed us to the re-conquest of Burma;

(*b*) CAPITAL complied most closely with my directive, and was likely to result in the re-conquest of Northern and Central Burma. But it involved an overland advance from the north, with all its attendant difficulties of supply and maintenance; and if the land campaign did not go well, we might be compelled to postpone the attack on Rangoon until the following inter-monsoon period. DRACULA, on the other hand, would allow us to exploit our command of the sea and undertake the re-conquest of Burma with good sea communications established; it might also induce the enemy to withdraw his main forces to the south, which would help our forces in Northern Burma to open the road to China;

(*c*) for CAPITAL, the air resources already in, or tentatively allocated to, the theatre, were almost sufficient; nevertheless, we should also need the third Combat Cargo Group and the second Air Commando. DRACULA, on the other hand, would require, in addition to both of these, the fourth Combat Cargo Group, which could, however, be released soon after the initial fly-in to Rangoon. It would also require additional naval and amphibious forces, and almost certainly two more divisions; though at a pinch either operation could just be carried out with the military forces already at our disposal. Detailed plans had already been submitted to justify the use of the additional aircraft, which could all be provided from the air resources which General Arnold had offered us.

(*d*) CAPITAL appeared likely to yield the quicker results, but it would be necessary to know before the 1st September which of these two operations we were to prepare for; so that all plans for the offensive could be carried out according to programme, and the Japanese prevented from taking the initiative themselves after the monsoon.

225. One new strategic factor to be taken into account was the Japanese offensive in China, which had been launched from Canton and Changsha; for if this were to succeed sufficiently to threaten the American airfields and trunk railways in those areas, the Generalissimo might recall the Yunnan Force to China—and possibly Lieut.-General Stilwell's Chinese divisions as well. But unless I could definitely depend on the continued presence of these troops in Burma for the remainder of the year (and if possible during 1945) the re-conquest of Northern Burma would have to be carried out with the existing British, Indian and African divisions at my disposal; and since all of these would by then have been continuously engaged for much longer than was good for their efficiency, considerable ground, as well as air, reinforcements would be required. But the military situation appeared to be improving, and arrangements for building up air-supply to China were well forward. The Generalissimo was hopeful of being able to launch a counter-offensive; so it seemed reasonable to hope that we would not be called on to send reinforcements to the China theatre.

226. It had been decided that I was to visit London as soon as the operational situation on the N.C.A.C. front had cleared up and Lieut.-General Stilwell could be spared to come to Kandy and take command of the theatre during my absence On the 1st August, when the fall of Myitkyina was imminent, General Stilwell (promoted on that day to the rank of full General) arrived in Kandy; I turned over to him and left for London, accompanied by Major-General Wedemeyer and the Directors of Plans. The primary object of my visit was to discuss fully the higher strategy of the war in South-East Asia; and I was asked to bring with me full details of CAPITAL and DRACULA, and also the latest plan for CULVERIN.[1] But various other questions had for some time been under review, and I proposed to bring them up in London.

227. The most important of these was the readjustment of the unbalanced system of command of the land forces. For I was still having to deal direct with one army commander, General Stilwell (in his capacity of Commanding-General, N.C.A.C.), whilst I was dealing with the other, Lieut.-General Slim, through General Giffard, Commander-in-Chief of

[1] See 'B', paragraphs 10 and 143.

11 Army Group. After a full discussion with all concerned, I decided to renew my request for the creation of an Allied land forces Commander-in-Chief, with whom I could deal direct and who would control on my behalf 11 Army Group and N.C.A.C.; and any future additions to our land forces. Such a system would involve the least possible dislocation, since the Army Group Headquarters, with the addition of an American element, could easily constitute an Allied Headquarters for all the land forces. At the same time I should be free from the detailed control of forces engaged in land fighting, and could devote more of my attention to the additional responsibilities which would arise when eventually we re-occupied Sumatra, Malaya, Siam and French Indo-China.

228. On arriving in London, I submitted a memorandum to the Chiefs of Staff, which summarised my views on future operations and emphasised the desirability of carrying out the amphibious operation against Rangoon—at the same time pointing out that this could not be undertaken without reinforcements of men and material from Europe. I estimated that five divisions would be needed: three of which could be withdrawn from Northern and Central Burma (where we would still be able to exert pressure with the remaining divisions of N.C.A.C. and 4 and 33 Corps), whilst two would have to be found elsewhere. The Chiefs of Staff considered some form of major land operation in Northern and Central Burma essential, to retain the initiative and pin down the main Japanese forces; but they agreed with me that, even if all phases of CAPITAL were carried out, it would be necessary to undertake the amphibious operation as soon as possible. Since it was clear, however, that both the overland advance and the amphibious operation could not be carried out in full, it was impossible to set a target date, or decide the scale of the amphibious operation, until we knew to what extent the Americans would agree to a curtailment of the overland advance.

229. On the 15th August, Major-General Wedemeyer left London for Washington, to consult with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to discover their views on the proposed operations. On the 17th, he telegraphed that they would give favourable consideration to the amphibious operation, provided that land operations in Northern Burma were pressed to the utmost, and the greater part of CAPITAL carried out. This meant, in effect, that two out of the three divisions which it had been proposed to withdraw from the land fighting and use for the amphibious operation would have to remain in Northern Burma. Nevertheless, the British Chiefs of Staff intimated that they considered our bill of five divisions too light, and they suggested a minimum of seven; while Major-General Wedemeyer confirmed that the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff also regarded our original bill as being too small, and would be more likely to agree to the operation if the forces were increased.

230. The bill consequently was increased to seven divisions, of which six would have to be found outside the theatre; and I was told that, if the operation was approved and the European situation continued to develop favourably, all the necessary additional resources could be made available—so long as India was prepared to receive them. It was agreed that I should request General Auchinleck to use every possible expedient for developing still further India's capacity as a base; and, above all, to increase the speed at which it could receive reinforcements from Europe to be mounted in time for an amphibious operation in March, 1945.

231. My proposals for reorganisation of command were being considered by the Chiefs of Staff; and the question of appointing a Commander-in-Chief for the Allied land forces in South-East Asia was being referred to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. I pressed for a very early decision. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff offered me Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese as Commander-in-Chief of the proposed Allied land forces organisation; and I accepted, subject to the agreement of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Lieut.-General Leese was at this time in command of Eighth Army in Italy, so I could not meet him personally to discuss future plans; but the C.I.G.S. volunteered to put him in the picture on my behalf.

232. As Air Chief Marshal Peirse's term of office was due to expire in November, I consulted the Chief of the Air Staff about a successor for him, and was allowed to choose Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, who had been my Air Commander in the Dieppe operation. He was now Allied Air Commander-in-Chief to General Eisenhower; but I succeeded, on a brief visit to the General in Normandy, in obtaining his release; whereupon I offered him the post, which he accepted. The Air Chief Marshal joined my temporary Headquarters in London, and advised on the air aspect of future plans in S.E.A.C. After I left he continued working in close conjunction with Major-General Wedemeyer, on his return from Washington and while he stayed in London to clear up outstanding details.

233. On the 22nd August, after requesting a very early decision on future operations so that firm and detailed planning could begin, I returned to Kandy. The Planners remained in London for further

consultations with the Joint Planning Staff; being joined by Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory, as Allied Air C.-in-C.-designate, and by Major-General Wedemeyer on his return from Washington. On my arrival at Kandy, I outlined the revised plans to my Commanders-in-Chief; as well as to the Viceroy in Simla, and to General Auchinleck in Delhi. There was general agreement that the earliest possible recapture of Burma was the first essential; and that the earliest possible recapture of Singapore came next in importance. General Auchinleck assured me that by taking exceptional measures, at the expense of his own Command, he could manage to accept all the requisite additional reinforcements within the necessary period.

234. In the meantime, the Committee which had been set up in June under Air Vice-Marshal Whitworth-Jones to make recommendations for improving land/air co-operation, now presented its report[1]. The Committee had visited all superior headquarters and formations on the Arakan and Central fronts, as well as a number of forward air units and brigades. Its main recommendations were:—

(*a*) that 221 and 224 Groups should be organised on a mobile basis, and relieved of the responsibilities of the static defence of vital areas such as Calcutta and Chittagong;

(*b*) that mobile signals and radar equipment adapted to conditions in Burma should be developed, and placed at the disposal of the mobile Groups;

(*c*) that the land forces allotted to offensive operations should be closely co-ordinated under an Army headquarters and be relieved as far as possible of preoccupation with administrative responsibilities in back areas;

(*d*) that an Allied Commander of all land forces in Burma should be appointed;

(*e*) that the respective headquarters of land and air forces required to operate jointly should be adjacent, so that joint planning and joint control of day-to-day operations could be facilitated; and that the land and air commanders should both be prepared to sacrifice some of their respective interests so as to gain the advantages which a Joint Headquarters would provide.

After discussion with the land and air Commanders-in-Chief, who agreed with the recommendations of the Committee, I directed that this report should form the basis of land/air co-operation in the Command, and that its recommendations should be implemented without delay—with the exception of (*d*), which was of course a part of the larger question of the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief for all Allied land forces in the Command.

235. Now that I was to be allowed to have a Commander-in-Chief of Allied land forces, he would be able to have American planners on his staff, as was the case with the other two Commanders-in-Chief. I had integrated the British Commonwealth and U.S. air forces in the previous December; and there would now be no reason why the reorganisation and integration of the planning staffs should not take place. I therefore decided, with the agreement of the Commanders-in-Chief, to amalgamate their planners with my own;[2] and by this means an inter-Allied, inter-service Joint Planning Staff was set up. The J.P.S. contained separate sections for strategical and executive planning. A Director of Plans and a Deputy Director were appointed from each of the services; and the Commanders-in-Chief agreed to my nominating the previous Directors and Deputy Directors of the War Staff—including, later on, my U.S. Air Director in place of a British Air Director. These were appointed to the staff of their own service Commander-in-Chief, as well as for duty with my Headquarters.

236. At the same time a Joint Logistical Planning Committee was set up, under the general direction of my Principal Administrative Officer, to provide the J.P.S. with logistical information and advice before the appointment of force commanders and the beginning of detailed force planning. This committee consisted of a chairman (the head of "Q" Plans Division, H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A.) and of representatives of the three Commanders-in-Chief; as well as of staff officers from the P.A.O.'s department. Its chairman was also Director of Administrative Planning; he attended meetings of the Directors of Plans, whenever this was necessary, and was responsible for supplying all necessary logistical information.

237. Since the Joint Planners owed their individual service allegiance to their respective Commanders-in-Chief and their collective allegiance to me, the time-honoured objection was raised when this organisation was formed that a man cannot serve two masters. But in the remaining twelve months of war-time planning (and through a further nine months of complex post-war problems) the Joint Planners were to prove the fallacy of this opinion. The new organisation speeded up the procedure of planning, and increased its efficiency, by providing machinery at a lower level for harmonising divergent views, and for ensuring that the views of each Ally and each service carried equal weight. By means of the J.P.S., the Commanders-in-Chief were more easily able to fulfil their role as my service advisers; and I, in my turn, was able to keep in close touch with planning and directives at every stage.

[1] See 'B', paragraph 159.

[2] See 'A', paragraphs 41–43.

* * *

On the 23rd July, I had instructed the Commanders-in-Chief to prepare for future operations on the lines laid down in Operations CAPITAL and DRACULA. For the Arakan front, General Giffard ordered Lieut.-General Slim, on the 29th, to carry out offensive and defensive operations in Arakan after the monsoon, with the object of :—

(*a*) securing our present forward positions in the Maungdaw–Tunnels area with the minimum forces; and
(*b*) preventing the enemy from penetrating the Kaladan Valley, and endangering the operations of our air forces and our lines of communication in the area west of the Mayu Range.

239. During August, monsoon conditions on this front continued to force Lieut.-General Christison to confine operations almost entirely to patrolling, and small local actions. On the 4th September, Lieut.-General Slim informed Lieut.-General Christison that 4 and 33 Corps would launch large-scale offensive operations across the Chindwin, and into Central Burma, at the beginning of December; and that it was proposed to use 15 Corps to contain enemy forces in Arakan during these other operations. 224 Group[1] would be responsible for providing close air-support, and for maintaining air superiority. During the month, 25 Indian Division, from its positions in the Tunnels area, began to probe southward down the Mayu Range and south-eastward into the Kalapanzin Valley; while 81 West African Division moved southward down the jeep track from Chiringa, and concentrated in the Singpa area, in preparation for further operations in the Kaladan Valley.

240. By the end of the month, it was possible to pass to the offensive, and on the 28th September Lieut.-General Slim ordered 15 Corps:—

(*a*) to secure the area of Chittagong and Cox's Bazaar and prevent the enemy from interfering with our preparations in this area for future airborne operations;
(*b*) to secure the estuary of the Naaf River as a base for coastal forces and landing-craft;
(*c*) to carry out reconnaissance and raids from the sea along the whole Arakan coast, in conjunction with the Royal Navy (which would carry out bombardments, so as to force the enemy to lock up troops in this area); and
(*d*) to exploit any further withdrawal or thinning-out of the Japanese forces in Arakan.

241. During October, 26 Indian Division drove back a Japanese flank attack on Taung Bazaar; 25 Indian Division, on the Maungdaw–Buthidaung line, drove the enemy from his remaining positions immediately south of the Tunnels; and 81 West African Division, moving south-east to Paletwa, was deployed in the Kaladan Valley by the end of the month, and began to advance south down both banks of the river. By this time, also, 3 Commando Brigade had arrived back in Arakan in readiness for amphibious operations, and was taking over responsibility for the Teknaaf Peninsula. Thus, by the end of the monsoon, we had not only seized the initiative and advanced our line at several points in the Mayu Peninsula; but by re-establishing itself in the Kaladan Valley, 81 West African Division had removed all threats to our air-fields and bases in the coastal plain, and to the flank of our forces operating further to the west. On the 8th November, I issued a directive to the Commanders-in-Chief, for operations to clear Arakan (Operation ROMULUS[2]) and ultimately to capture Akyab (Operation TALON) by amphibious assault not later than the end of January.

242. On the N.C.A.C. front, 36 British Division, which had concentrated at Mogaung on relieving the Special Force, had begun to advance southward down the Railway Corridor at the beginning of August. On the 6th, the leading columns captured Sahmaw. As the monsoon was at its height and road communications were very difficult, the divisional engineers put the railway line in order and organised a system of trains drawn by jeeps with flanged wheels. The division then made good progress down the line of the railway and captured Pinbaw at the end of the month. In order to exploit the success in the Myitkyina–Mogaung area, an offensive was now to be undertaken to clear, as quickly as possible, an area through which the Ledo Road and the pipe-line into China were to run; the offensive had the further aim of linking up with the Chinese Expeditionary Force advancing from Yunnan, and finally of securing a protective zone to the south of the Road and the pipe-line.

243. During the monsoon, progress on the construction of the Ledo Road had inevitably been slow, some sectors of it having been put completely out of action by the rain. At these times, infantry and engineers had been supplied by air, and the latter had

[1] Under Air Vice-Marshal the Earl of Bandon, who had relieved Air Commodore A. Gray on the 19th July.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 265 (*b*).

been diverted temporarily from road-building to the construction of forward airfields and strips. The 6-inch pipe-line from Budge-Budge to Tinsukia had been completed in mid-August,[1] 752 miles of the line having been laid in five months; and a second 6-inch pipe-line was projected, which would follow the Road from Tinsukia right through into China.[2] Two 4-inch pipe-lines were also being laid down the line of the road; one, which was to end at Bhamo, was designed to support road-building operations and to supply the combat troops at various points in Burma; the other, which had been started in June, was to be reserved for the delivery of petrol (gasoline) to China.

244. For the offensive which was now to be undertaken, General Stilwell re-grouped his Chinese divisions into two armies (each one corresponding to one of our corps): the First Chinese Army, consisting of 30 and 38 Chinese Divisions, under Lieut.-General Sun Li-jen; and the Sixth Chinese Army, consisting of 14, 22 and 50 Chinese Divisions, under Lieut.-General Liao Yao-hsiang. In N.C.A.C., beside 36 British Division, there were also a Chinese tank brigade and a force of Kachin Levies[3], as well as a composite Chinese-American Task Force—5332 U.S. Brigade, known as MARS Brigade. General Stilwell had formed this in August with 475th U.S. Infantry Regiment (raised on the spot and containing some 8/900 of the original GALAHAD Force); 124th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, with two battalions of mountain artillery, and about 4,000 replacement troops (sent by General Marshall); and 1st Separate Chinese Regiment (trained at Ramgarh as infantry, with stress on operations by independent battalions).

245. The operation would be supported by 10th U.S.A.A.F. which now comprised squadrons of fighters, fighter-bombers, and transport aircraft (which had been strengthened in August by the addition of the second of the four Combat Cargo Groups[4]). In the first phase, it was planned to advance to the line of the Irrawaddy in three main thrusts:—

(*a*) in the west, 36 British Division was to advance down the Railway Corridor to seize the Katha–Indaw area. 50 Chinese Division would be held in reserve, and would later follow 36 British Division down the railway, to provide a right flank and a rearguard;

(*b*) in the centre, 22 Chinese Division was to follow the railway for a short distance and then strike due south-east to the Irrawaddy, with the object of securing the Shwegu area; and

(*c*) in the east, the First Chinese Army was to thrust down the Myitkyina–Bhamo road, capture Bhamo, and clear the area for the road and pipe-line to China.

246. On the 3rd October, I issued a new directive to General Stilwell, in which I ordered him to carry out his part in Phases 1 and 2 of CAPITAL:—

*Phase* 1 (to be completed by mid-December): to destroy and expel the enemy to a line which included the key-points Rail Indaw, Kunchaung, Sikaw and Namhkam;

*Phase* 2 (to be completed by mid-February, 1945): to destroy and expel the enemy north of the general line which was to include the key points Thabeikkyin, Mogok, Mongmit and Lashio, and be prepared to exploit in anticipation of Phases 3 and 4.

247. 36 British Division continued its advance down the Railway Corridor towards Rail Indaw; and by the end of October it had captured Mohnyin, Mawhun, and Mawlu, in quick succession, reaching Pinwe (a few miles north-east of Rail Indaw) early in November.[5] Here, and on the adjacent Gyobin Chaung, they met with strong resistance; and it was not until the end of November that they were able to put an end to Japanese resistance in the Corridor. By the end of October, the Ledo Road was carrying traffic to within 80 miles of the point (just south of Myitkyina) where it was to join the existing Myitkyina–Bhamo–Namhkam–Wanting road. When it was built through to Namti, soon afterwards, it had become possible to send supplies down the road from Ledo and put them on the railway for distribution to Mogaung, Myitkyina, and to 36 British Division in the Railway Corridor. 50 Chinese Division, which had followed 36 British Division down the Railway Corridor beyond Hopin, was ordered to go south as far as Mawlu, and then to strike eastward to the Shwegu area and assist 22 Chinese Division in its operations.

248. 22 Chinese Division had begun its advance from the Kamaing area in the middle of October, following in the wake of 36 British Division as far as Hopin, and then striking south-eastward over the mountains that separate the Railway Corridor from the valley of the Kaukkwe. It then pushed southward

[1] See 'A', paragraph 51.
[2] This was begun in the following October.
[3] Who had been re-enlisted with N.C.A.C. under officers of the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), the American equivalent of our guerrilla organisation, Force 136. (See 'B', paragraph 456.)
[4] See 'B', paragraphs 219 and 220.
[5] See Map 19 (facing page 73).

towards the Irrawaddy, and reached the river at several points in the Shwegu area. Leaving a small force to secure this area, the division then crossed the river and continued southward down the Sinkan Valley. At this point it was ordered to advance as far as Si-U, and then to strike south-eastward to cut the old Burma Road.

249. The First Chinese Army had begun its advance from Myitkyina in the middle of October; 38 Chinese Division proceeding almost unimpeded, and followed by the main body of 30 Chinese Division, until it occupied Myothit on the 29th; when it came up against the enemy's second line of defence, covering Bhamo. The Japanese were strongly entrenched along the line of the Taiping River; and in order to obviate the casualties that an opposed crossing would entail, a flanking movement with two regiments was made through the hills to the east of Bhamo, while a third regiment contained the enemy on the line of the river. In the second week of November, the outflanking force came down into the plain and laid siege to Momauk and Bhamo. This attack surprised the enemy, who suffered heavy casualties; and by the middle of the month Bhamo was entirely surrounded.

250. On 29th July, General Giffard had ordered Lieut.-General Slim to prepare detailed plans in consultation with Major-General Stratemeyer for the following phases of CAPITAL:—

*Phase* 1—the seizure of Kalewa and Kalemyo by a land advance combined with an airborne operation, while the forces of N.C.A.C. advanced via the Katha–Bhamo area towards Kunchaung, Sikaw and Namhkam.

*Phase* 2—an overland and airborne assault[1] against the Ye-U–Shwebo area, while the forces of N.C.A.C., made a complementary advance to a line Mogok–Mongmit–Lashio (possibly using airborne forces to assist in the capture of the last-named place).

*Phase* 3—the securing of Burma down to a line Mandalay–Pakokku, while the forces of N.C.A.C. advanced to a line Maymyo–Lashio.

Lieut.-General Slim had also been ordered to consolidate, in co-operation with N.C.A.C., along a line Pakokku – Mandalay – Maymyo – Kyaukme – Lashio; and, if possible, to exploit to the south.

251. On the 6th August, Lieut.-General Slim gave Lieut.-General Stopford, who was at this time in command of all operations on the Central front, the following tasks[2]:—

(*a*) to pursue the enemy on the lines:—
  (i) Imphal–Tiddim–Kalemyo–Kalewa;
  (ii) Tamu–Indainggyi–Kalewa;
  (iii) Tamu–Sittaung;

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(*c*) to capture Kalewa, if opportunity offered, and establish a bridgehead over the Chindwin in that area.

During August, the clearing of the Ukhrul area was completed; and columns were pushed out towards Homalin and Humine, with orders to destroy what was left of the Japanese between Ukhrul and the Chindwin. 15 and 31 Japanese Divisions, and Yamamoto Force of 33 Japanese Division, were being pursued towards the Chindwin, down the Kabaw Valley; while the main strength of 33 Japanese Division was being steadily forced down the Tiddim Road. 11 East African Division, which had taken over from 23 Indian Division at Tamu, started a two-pronged drive: one southward, down the Kabaw Valley to Kalemyo; the other eastward, along the track to Sittaung, on the Chindwin. The division was entirely supplied by air: the airstrip at Tamu was reconditioned to operate two fighter squadrons for close support and the wounded were evacuated by air whenever strips were available.

252. Tactical squadrons of 221 Group assisted the advance by attacking enemy vehicles in the Kabaw Valley; as well as river craft on the Chindwin—which were now of great importance to the enemy; for the capacity of the Sagaing–Ye-U railway had been greatly reduced by air attack, and the use of other land lines was restricted by the monsoon. Attacks on river craft were carried out mainly by Spitfires, Hurricanes and Beaufighters, later joined by Wellingtons and Mitchells (B-25). The last also laid magnetic and oscillating mines in the river, in order to catch traffic attempting to move under cover of either cloud or darkness.

253. Throughout September and October, 11 East African Division made steady progress, in spite of appalling weather and the very difficult terrain of the Kabaw Valley, where every chaung overflowed and inundated large areas. Roads, which turned into seas of mud, had to be completely reconstructed behind the advance, and then had to be maintained on a

[1] Airborne operations in Phases 2 and 3 were abandoned through shortage of aircraft (See 'B', paragraph 305) and all advances were made overland only (See 'B', paragraphs 320 and 321).

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[2] For which Eastern Air Command undertook to provide air-supply for a maximum of five brigades.

standard which could take a fairly heavy flow of military traffic. The low-lying and swampy Kabaw Valley—colloquially, the "Valley of Death"—is said to be one of the most highly malarial places in the world, and the scrub typhus mite, always a potential source of serious casualties, also abounds. Good hygiene discipline among the troops, however, and the fact that during the advance the whole length of the road was sprayed with D.D.T. from the air, and every camp-site was sprayed by hand, kept our casualties from malaria and typhus surprisingly low. The Japanese, on the other hand, perished in hundreds from these diseases, owing to a lack of medical precautions or elementary hygiene discipline.

254. On the 4th September a brigade of 11 East African Division occupied Sittaung; like Tamu, it was littered with newly dead, rotting corpses, and much abandoned equipment. The Chindwin was now in full flood. Bases were immediately established on the opposite bank, from which extensive patrolling was carried out. On the 4th October, the main body of the division captured Yazagyo (halfway down the Kabaw Valley); and then secured the tracks leading eastward from the Valley to the Chindwin. Though the weather was now worse than ever, Hurribombers continued to give effective support to the advancing troops. But the administrative services were strained to the utmost: continuous work was required to keep the road in operation, and infantry and other combatant troops had to be used on road construction. In the second half of October, the monsoon stopped, and the ground began to dry out. 11 East African Division pushed on steadily, and on the 15th November occupied Kalemyo, which was found deserted and in ruins.

255. In the meantime, 5 Indian Division had been making a parallel advance southward down the Tiddim Road. The divisional Commander, who had foreseen that the Manipur river, which was in full flood, might provide a serious obstacle, had decided to turn the enemy's flank. He had therefore sent a brigade back by motor transport via Imphal to Shuganu on the east bank of the river, whence they had marched to Anlung, supplied by air, and carried out operations against the enemy. These operations led to the almost unopposed crossing of the Manipur River north of Tuitum by the rest of 5 Indian Division, who had reached the river on the 15th September. Owing to continuous landslides and the shortage of engineering equipment, it was no longer considered feasible to maintain the Tiddim Road, and the Division now had to be supplied entirely by air-dropping—even to spare jeep engines. As there were no landing strips available,[1] no further reinforcements could arrive.

256. On the 17th September, Tuitum was occupied, and at the beginning of October the battle for Tiddim began. The final approach to the town from the north is very difficult, since at Milestone 149 the road leaves the valley of the Manipur River and climbs 3,700 feet in ten miles, the first six consisting of 36 steep hairpin bends, known colloquially as the "Chocolate Staircase". Tiddim itself is 162 miles from Imphal and lies 5,600 feet above sea-level. Having failed to hold us on the line of the river, the enemy clearly set great store by the defence of Tiddim, where he stood the best chance of checking our advance: he was firmly dug in at Milestone 158, with a forward position at Milestone 152, and he was also entrenched in a strong mountain position east of the town. 5 Indian Division pressed their attack with great vigour against these positions: and the final assault at Milestone 158 was supported by tanks and Hurribombers. Thick mist hid the advancing tanks, while the noise of their engines was drowned by that of low-flying aircraft: complete surprise was achieved, and the position was captured.

257. Tiddim was occupied on the 18th October; and by that time the surrounding mountain positions had also been overcome. The division next undertook the reduction of the remaining Japanese strong-points south of the town, which were centred around Kennedy Peak (8,871 feet) and Fort White (5,400 feet). The most strongly held of these positions was "Vital Corner", which was blasted out of the solid rock of a precipice, with a sheer drop of several hundred feet; this was captured on the 2nd November, after a bombardment by artillery, mortars and four squadrons of Hurribombers. On the 4th, Kennedy Peak was occupied by a successful assault with Hurribomber support, after two previous attacks had failed. Hurribombers and Mitchells (B-25) were continuously in action, striking accurately and effectively at these strong-points; and in some cases the air attack blasted the position so thoroughly that our troops could walk in unopposed. This happened at Fort White, which was occupied without opposition on the 8th, when all the other strong-points had been captured.

258. 5 Indian Division then pressed on eastward towards Kalemyo, while mobile columns mopped-up in the surrounding country. Meanwhile, the Lushai Brigade, which was protecting the Division's right flank, kept up its pressure to the south of Fort White, and added to the disorganisation of the retreating enemy; it then struck south-eastward into the valley of the Myittha River, to the south of Kalemyo, driving the Japanese in this area towards Gangaw or towards the Chindwin. On the 13th November, the leading patrol of 5 Indian Division joined up with a patrol of

[1] Nor could any be constructed in that mountainous country under monsoon conditions.

11 East African Division, just west of Kalemyo, and together they entered the village;[1] thus achieving the object of the two-pronged drive down the Kabaw Valley and the Tiddim Road.

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In September, plans for future strategy in South-East Asia were considered at the Second Quebec Conference (OCTAGON), where it was decided that Operations CAPITAL and DRACULA should be put into effect as soon as possible after the monsoon, which was due to end in October. On the 12th, the Prime Minister telegraphed warning me to make my bill for DRACULA as low as possible, so that the operation should have the best chance of acceptance when it came up for final consideration by the Defence Committee—prior to a Cabinet meeting which was to be held on the 2nd October, to review the strategic position in Europe. As this advice diverged from the views of the British Chiefs of Staff, and from Major-General Wedemeyer's report of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff views in this matter, I decided to send the Director of Plans (Army), Brigadier B. C. H. Kimmins, to Quebec at once, armed with a full brief. Unfortunately, he was delayed by bad weather; and when he arrived the conference had broken up, earlier than had been expected. The Chief of the Imperial General Staff ordered him to Washington at once, to see the Joint Staff Mission—after which Brigadier Kimmins proceeded to London, where he saw the Foreign Secretary, the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the Directors of Plans.

260. In the meantime, on the 16th, the Combined Chiefs of Staff had given me the following directive:—

"Your object is the destruction and expulsion of all Japanese forces in Burma at the earliest possible date. Operations to achieve this object must not, however, prejudice the security of the existing air-supply route to China, including the air staging post at Myitkyina and the opening of overland communications. Following are approved operations:—

(*a*) the stages of Operation CAPITAL necessary to the security of the air route and the attainment of overland communications with China;

(*b*) Operation DRACULA. The Combined Chiefs of Staff attach the greatest importance to the effective discharge of the task under (*a*), and to the execution of Operation DRACULA before the monsoon in 1945, with a target date of March 15th.

If DRACULA has to be postponed until after the monsoon of 1945, you will continue to exploit Operation CAPITAL as far as may be possible, without prejudice to preparations for the execution of Operation DRACULA in November, 1945".

261. Firm plans for CAPITAL and DRACULA were completed and approved by the end of September; they were based on reduced bills, in the light of the Prime Minister's injunction. An examination of the two operations showed that they should be regarded as two phases in one operation (PRIZE)—the overall campaign for the clearance of Burma—for in the later stages of CAPITAL a supply-line through Rangoon would be almost indispensable to supplement air and land supply to the ground forces. There was, therefore, a risk that, if we could not use Rangoon as a base, we might be forced during the next monsoon, not only to abandon our main objective, but also to leave a great number of ground and air forces stranded in the highly malarial districts of Central and Northern Burma, with difficult and inadequate supply lines and a shortage of transport aircraft. On the 1st October, I signalled these conclusions to the British Chiefs of Staff; and the next day I issued directives to the Commander-in-Chief, 11 Army Group, the Commanding General, N.C.A.C., and the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief, laying down future strategy and detailing land and air operations for the remainder of the year and the first quarter of 1945.

262. Although a large body of well-informed official opinion at this time considered that Germany would capitulate in October, it was obvious that no definite decisions could be given while the duration of the war in Europe was still uncertain. Nevertheless, the plans for CAPITAL and DRACULA had been based on the assumption that the necessary resources from Europe would be made available in time to make DRACULA possible early in 1945. On the 2nd October, however, it was agreed at the Cabinet meeting[2] that Germany would not after all be defeated before the Spring of 1945; and it was therefore decided that the resources which had been promised to South-East Asia (including more than 250,000 troops) could not

[1] 5 Indian Division, which had been fighting continuously from early July, was concentrated at Kalemyo early in December before being relieved by 20 Indian Division and withdrawn to Assam to rest and prepare for future operations. In five months they had killed and counted 1,902 of the enemy, whilst sustaining 403 casualties, of whom only 88 were killed.

[2] Attended by General Eisenhower, Field-Marshal Alexander, and Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery (later the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein).

be spared. Moreover, British divisions which had been retained in England for use in S.E.A.C. were now to be released to General Eisenhower; while Indian divisions destined for Burma would remain in Italy with Field-Marshal Alexander. We were now ordered to exploit Operation CAPITAL throughout 1945, and to prepare to launch DRACULA as soon as possible after the monsoon, by which time it was hoped that large-scale reinforcements would be available. This meant that DRACULA was postponed until November, 1945.

263. On the 9th October, the Prime Minister telegraphed his regret that owing to *force majeure* we had once again been thrown back on a reduced scale of operations. He asked me to meet him in Cairo, to discuss any other pre-monsoon operations that appeared feasible and that would, broadly speaking, lie within our resources. On the 15th, I left Kandy for Cairo, taking with me a brief outline of suggestions that seemed feasible. There had not been much time for examining them; so when I found, on my arrival, that the Prime Minister and his party had been delayed in Moscow,[1] I took the opportunity to examine them more thoroughly with my staff. Discussions were also held with the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Force, General Sir Bernard Paget, and his staff. He said that he would do all he could to help and that, when divisions were eventually released for S.E.A.C. from the European theatre, he was prepared to mount some of them for me in the Middle East.

264. On the 20th October, the Prime Minister arrived with the Foreign Secretary, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and his own Chief of Staff;[2] and a meeting was at once called. Mr. Churchill expressed satisfaction with the progress of current operations in S.E.A.C., being particularly pleased with the monsoon campaign of the Fourteenth Army (who had just captured Tiddim). He said he was anxious that some form of amphibious operation should be carried out before the next monsoon; but it was agreed that the military component would have to be drawn from Burma or India, and that very early steps must be taken to release these necessary formations from the present battle. The operations would have to begin by mid-December, by which time the ground in Arakan would be sufficiently dry to allow of using tanks; and I strongly recommended a plan that General Giffard had put forward, for clearing Arakan early in 1945 and releasing the main forces of 15 Corps. The capture of a naval port and airfield in the Japanese outer perimeter (such as the Andaman or Nicobar Islands, or Sabang in Northern Sumatra) was then discussed; as well as the seizure of Cheduba Island, or even of a point on the Kra Isthmus, as a preliminary to this. The Prime Minister, who favoured an assault on a strategic point on the Kra Isthmus, asked that a plan for this should be examined, as a possible first step towards the capture of Singapore. He also asked for proposals for future operations, with full statements of the additional resources necessary for carrying them out.

265. I returned to Kandy by way of Delhi, where I saw the Viceroy and General Auchinleck and told them the results of these discussions. At the end of the month, I submitted the following programme to the Chiefs of Staff:—

(*a*) Phases 1 and 2 of CAPITAL,[3] which would enable us to re-occupy Northern Burma down to a line Kalewa–Shwebo–Mogok–Lashio. (If these operations destroyed and encircled large Japanese forces north of Mandalay, we would exploit this and advance southward towards Rangoon. If not, we would hold the enemy on this line and withdraw troops for more profitable operations);

(*b*) the final clearing of Arakan[4] (Operation ROMULUS) and the capture of Akyab (Operation TALON), in order to release as soon as possible two or more divisions and administrative units at present tied up in Arakan;[5]

(*c*) an amphibious operation by two divisions in March, 1945, to establish a forward naval and air base on the Kra Isthmus before the 1945 monsoon;

(*d*) DRACULA after the 1945 monsoon; and

(*e*) an amphibious operation against the coast of Malaya, under the general shelter of Sumatra, which would be undertaken in spite of the monsoon.

266. At the end of October, widespread changes were made in the higher appointments in the theatre; and the preliminaries to the 1945 campaign coincided with the re-organisation of the U.S. Command, as well as of the land forces Command in South-East Asia. I had on several occasions pointed out to General

[1] Where Mr. Churchill was holding a conference with Generalissimo Stalin.
[2] General Sir Hastings (later Lord) Ismay.
[3] See 'B', paragraphs 246 and 250.
[4] This did not include the part of Arakan south of Taungup but was sufficient for our purpose of relieving troops otherwise uneconomically committed.
[5] See 'B', paragraph 241.

Stilwell that it seemed humanly impossible for one man to carry out tasks which demanded his presence at Kandy, Delhi, the N.C.A.C. front and Chungking—places more than a thousand miles apart from each other—and in May I had finally informed him that I was raising this matter with General Marshall, through the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.[1] My Chief of Staff had, on my instructions, suggested to the C.I.G.S., when urging the appointment of a Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land forces, that the U.S. Command should be divided to fit the theatre boundaries, so that General Stilwell would be free to concentrate on the China theatre, of which his knowledge was unrivalled. The C.I.G.S. had discussed these proposals with General Marshall; but it was not until October that they were implemented.

267. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff had now decided that the C.B.I. theatre should be divided into the China and the India-Burma theatres,[2] and General Stilwell had been recalled to Washington, to take up the post of Commanding General, Army Ground Forces in the United States. He was succeeded, on the 12th November, as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, by my P.A.O., Lieut.-General Wheeler—who was appointed to this post with my whole-hearted concurrence, but who at my request also continued as P.A.O. to the Command. Major-General Wedemeyer, my Deputy Chief of Staff, was promoted Lieut.-General and took over command of the U.S. forces in the China theatre,[3] as well as the post of Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo. Major-General (promoted to Lieut.-General) Sultan[4] took over the newly-formed India-Burma Theatre (I.B.T.) and also succeeded General Stilwell in command of N.C.A.C. At the same time, the Generalissimo (who had agreed in July to a military demarcation line between Burma and China) agreed to Lieut.-General Sultan's appointment as Commander-in-Chief of all Chinese troops in Burma—to include any part of the Chinese Expeditionary Force which might cross the border from Yunnan. In fact, General Stilwell was succeeded by three Lieut.-Generals, each of whom had at least two entirely separate functions.

268. My proposals for the re-organisation of the command of the Allied land forces in the theatre had at last been approved by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and accepted by the Generalissimo; and the new arrangement came into effect on the 12th November. Lieut.-General Leese became Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia (A.L.F.S.E.A.), succeeding General Giffard; he took over 11 Army Group Staff to which a number of U.S. Army staff officers (headed by Brig.-General Ray Maddocks, late of H.Q. S.A.C.S.E.A. staff) were now appointed, to form H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A. The following now came under Lieut.-General Leese's direct command:—

(*a*) the Fourteenth Army, which now consisted of 4 Corps and 33 Corps only; having, in preparation for operations in Central Burma, been relieved of responsibility for Arakan;

(*b*) 15 Corps, which would operate in Arakan parallel with, and in support of, Fourteenth Army;

(*c*) Lines of Communication Command, which had just been formed at Comilla on the 12th November (at the instance of General Giffard) to relieve Lieut.-General Slim of administrative responsibilities in the rear areas and enable him to concentrate entirely on the battle;

(*d*) 36 British Division, which was under the operational control of N.C.A.C.; and

(*e*) Ceylon Army Command, with various garrisons in the Indian Ocean islands.

269. Lieut.-General Leese also exercised operational control, through Lieut.-General Sultan, over the American, Chinese and British forces in N.C.A.C.; and over any part of the Chinese Expeditionary Force from Yunnan crossing the border from China into Burma.[5] So that a separate commander of Allied land forces in Burma should not be necessary, Lieut.-General Leese undertook to fulfil this function in addition to that of Commander-in-Chief A.L.F.S.E.A.; he therefore was called on to function at two levels; on one of which he worked at the level of the Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet,[6] and the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief—while on the other, he worked at the level of Major-General Stratemeyer the Allied Air Commander for Burma. As Commander-in-Chief A.L.F.S.E.A., Lieut.-General Leese proceeded principally to use his main Headquarters at Kandy,[7]

[1] See 'B', paragraphs 171 and 172.

[2] My suggestion to General Marshall that the American component in S.E.A.C. should be called 'South-East Asia Theatre of Operations (S.E.A.T.O.)' arrived too late to prevent the psychological handicap of having two different names for practically the same theatre (S.E.A.C. and I.B.T.).

[3] His place was filled by Major-General Horace H. Fuller, who had commanded a Task Force in the South-West Pacific.

[4] Who had been General Stilwell's Deputy Commanding General in South-East Asia.

[5] 11 Chinese Army Group crossed the border in January, 1945.

[6] Re-named East Indies Fleet at the end of the month. (See 'B', paragraph 284.)

[7] Where he was represented, when away, by Major-General Playfair. (See 'A', paragraph 14.)

alongside H.Q. Air Command S.E.A. which had moved there in October. As Allied Land Commander for the Burma campaign, he generally used his Advanced Headquarters at Barrackpore near Calcutta, alongside H.Q. Eastern Air Command, which had moved there in April. At this time an important change was also made in the composition of the armoured brigades, and it was agreed in principle with General Auchinleck:—

(*a*) that each armoured brigade should include an infantry battalion;

(*b*) that all armoured regiments should be equipped with medium tanks;

(*c*) and that each armoured squadron should include a troop of flame-throwers.

These changes were put into effect as soon as the necessary personnel and material became available.

270. Parallel with the re-organisation of the land forces, extensive re-organisation of air-supply to the land and air forces was also taking place—except on the N.C.A.C. front where, since June, air-supply had been the responsibility of the 10th U.S.A.A.F. With the dissolution of Troop Carrier Command in June, the air-supply as well as the tactical support of the Fourteenth Army had been the responsibility of Third Tactical Air Force; but the stage was now being reached when the present and future commitments of the transport squadrons (including the day-to-day supply of a large army on the move, the evacuation of casualties, and considerable airborne operations) were so numerous and extensive that they could not be effectively controlled by a purely air force organisation. In October, therefore, a joint Army/Air supply organisation had been set up at Comilla, with an air force component—Combat Cargo Task Force (C.C.T.F.)—and an army component—Combined Army Air Transport Organisation (C.A.A.T.O.).

271. The integrated U.S./British headquarters of C.C.T.F. was under Brigadier-General Frederick W. Evans (directly responsible to Major-General Stratemeyer) and comprised all the U.S. and British transport squadrons supporting 11 Army Group. (The R.A.F. element of this force, whose Commander was deputy to Brigadier-General Evans, was to become 232 Group in the following April.) C.A.A.T.O. was under Colonel (later Brigadier) J. A. Dawson: who came directly under General Giffard, and subsequently under Lieut.-General Leese. H.Q., C.A.A.T.O., replaced Fourteenth Army Headquarters[1] as the central controlling authority in all matters of military organisation behind air-supply (including demands by Army and Corps, and the correlation of these with the current capacity of air-lift), as well as controlling the Rear Airfields Maintenance Organisations (R.A.M.O.). Its most important function was the accurate assessment of air-supply priorities, for the requirements of the ground forces nearly always exceeded the supplies available.

272. When the joint organisation C.C.T.F./C.A.A.T.O. was firmly established it was possible to disband H.Q. Third T.A.F.[2] Its two components—221 Group with its H.Q. at Imphal, alongside H.Q. Fourteenth Army, supporting operations on the Central front; and 224 Group with Advanced H.Q. near Cox's Bazaar, alongside 15 Corps H.Q., for operations in Arakan—now came directly under Eastern Air Command in Calcutta, and were made responsible for tactical air support in their respective geographical areas, which were unaltered. (This territorial division was not hard and fast, however, and 224 Group subsequently undertook tactical operations in support of Fourteenth Army, on the Central front, whenever it was urgent to supplement the work of 221 Group's hard-pressed squadrons.) The administrative and other non-operational functions which these two Groups had formerly carried out under Third T.A.F. (commanded by Air Marshal W. A. (later Sir Alec) Coryton, who had relieved Air Marshal Baldwin on 15th August, 1944), in addition to their operational roles, were taken over by a newly-created Headquarters R.A.F. Bengal/Burma. Air Marshal Coryton became A.O.C., R.A.F. Bengal/Burma, and Deputy Air Commander, Eastern Air Command, when H.Q. Third T.A.F. was disbanded.

273. With the move of H.Q. A.C.S.E.A. to Kandy, in October, a Headquarters, Base Air Forces, South-East Asia (B.A.F.S.E.A.), had been set up at Delhi under Air Marshal Sir Leslie Hollinghurst, who was directly responsible to the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief. By this arrangement the latter was able to divorce operational considerations, and the higher administrative control, from the extensive and complicated negotiations which had to be undertaken with the Government of India and G.H.Q. (I.) concerning development. But he continued to direct administrative policy in India, in so far as it affected the Command as a whole.

[1] Which moved from Comilla to Imphal on the 21st November.

[2] On the 4th December.

274. In the opinion of Air Marshal Garrod,[1] the joint C.C.T.F./C.A.A.T.O. organisation did not produce quite such good results as the system which 10th U.S.A.A.F. had built up on the N.C.A.C. front;[2] but he considered that this was largely due to lack of signals and telephone communications, and to shortage of personnel in the operating units—difficulties with which the N.C.A.C. organisation did not have to contend. But C.C.T.F./C.A.A.T.O. was able to give undivided attention to the daily allocation of tasks and priorities; and this was valuable not only because demand usually exceeded supply, but because there was recurring uncertainty about the availability of transport squadrons. Using a joint operations room, C.C.T.F. and C.A.A.T.O. worked in close co-operation; and after some initial difficulties built up an organisation which was successfully to stand the test of the swiftly-moving operations of the next few months. These extensive reorganisations of the air forces, by which they were put on an effective offensive basis before the opening of the 1945 campaign, completed the process which the setting-up of A.L.F.S.E.A.—by which I could divest myself of the anomaly of being the sole overall commander of the Allied land forces—had begun.

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## Fleet Operations During 1944

Admiral Sir Bruce (later Lord) Fraser relieved Admiral Somerville as Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet on 23rd August 1944. The question of postponing this date was diseussed, but at my request the arrangements already made for 23rd August were adhered to.

276. Throughout 1944, our Naval strategy had been conditioned by the fact that our amphibious forces had been withdrawn from the theatre, and that opportunities of bringing any of the enemy's ships to action were rare. While preparing for the resumption of amphibious strategy when the forces again became available, our policy had been chiefly aimed at inflicting the greatest possible damage on the Japanese in South-East Asia, and had been directed:—

(*a*) to denying the enemy the Indian Ocean, and cutting his sea communications to Burma, the Andamans and Nicobars, thus virtually blockading these island garrisons;

(*b*) to destroying the enemy's war potential, by naval air attacks on oil installations in the Netherlands East Indies, and by attacks on coastal shipping and military installations ashore;

(*c*) to providing the greatest support to 15 Corps in its operations along the Arakan coast;

(*d*) to protecting our sea communications[3] principally from attack by enemy submarines;

(*e*) to arranging diversionary operations planned to assist U.S. and Australian amphibious thrusts, in the Pacific, by pinning down Japanese naval forces in South-East Asia;

(*f*) to undertaking advanced mine-sweeping, and photographic reconnaissance of areas too distant for covering by land-based aircraft, in preparation for the resumption of our amphibious strategy; and

(*g*) to assisting our guerrilla operations by conveying members of Force 136 and similar organisations to and from enemy-held coasts.

277. At the end of January, Sir Arthur Power, Vice-Admiral Commanding 1st Battle Squadron, had arrived in Ceylon in his flagship, H.M.S. Renown, and had become second-in-command of the Eastern Fleet.[4] The battle cruiser Renown was accompanied by the battleships Valiant and Queen Elizabeth, and by two fleet carriers Illustrious[5] and Unicorn.[6] The Netherlands cruiser Tromp, with two Netherlands destroyers, had arrived at about the same time. This reinforcement of the Fleet had been timely, for in February the main Japanese Battle Fleet in the Pacific (consisting of four battleships, six cruisers, two aircraft carriers, followed by a third a month later, with destroyers and fleet auxiliaries) had transferred its base from Truk to Singapore. This fleet was superior to the Eastern Fleet, on paper, and could well have disputed our command of the sea at this time; for the Eastern Fleet was not yet in a position to make sweeps. At first, it had no destroyers

[1] In mid-November, Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory, the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief designate, was unfortunately killed in an air crash whilst flying out to take up his appointment. The Chief of the Air Staff telegraphed that he could not immediately find a permanent successor, and suggested that Air Chief Marshal Peirse might stay on for the time being. But he had already made arrangements to leave, and with his consent I sent him home and obtained the Chief of the Air Staff's agreement to the temporary appointment of Air Marshal Sir Guy Garrod.

[2] See 'B'. paragraphs 339–341.

[3] So that an overall, inter-service picture of operations in the theatre may be presented, I have been authorised by the Admiralty to refer in this Report to certain Fleet operations which were not carried out under my command.

[4] See 'A', paragraph 67.

[5] Wearing the flag of Rear-Admiral C. Moody, Rear-Admiral, Aircraft Carriers, Eastern Fleet.

[6] Really a Fleet Air Arm repair and supply ship; having a flying-deck she was used, however, as a fleet carrier while the strength of the fleet in carriers was low. She did not reach Trincomalee until the 2nd of February.

to screen it; and when these did arrive, they were used for convoy escort duties to meet the growing threat of Japanese and German submarines in the Indian Ocean. By calling in the destroyers, the fleet could have been made available to meet a sortie by the Japanese; but it soon transpired that their main Battle Fleet had not come to dispute our command of the sea. It had left Truk because this had recently come within bombing range of the U.S. forces; besides being at a far greater distance than Singapore from the main Japanese sources of oil fuel in the Netherlands East Indies.

278. Further reinforcements to the Eastern Fleet had begun to arrive in the Spring; the U.S. fleet carrier SARATOGA, with three U.S. destroyers, arrived at the end of March; the French battleship RICHELIEU came out early in April; and more British battleships and fleet carriers joined at intervals during the summer. In February, "S" Class submarines came to Trincomalee and immediately started operating. On the arrival of their depot ship MAIDSTONE, in March, they became the 8th Submarine Flotilla; and attacks on enemy coasting vessels trying to run through the Malacca Straits and up the coast of the Kra Isthmus and Tenasserim, or to creep along the west coast of Sumatra, were intensified. Admiral Somerville took active measures against Japanese and German submarines, and their supply ships, in the Indian Ocean; and successful operations were carried out against enemy tankers which were refuelling submarines. In the meantime, naval coastal forces were operating in close support of 15 Corps along the Arakan coast; and submarines gave considerable help to the guerrilla organisations, such as Force 136, by landing and taking off liaison officers on the coasts of enemy-occupied territory—about one-third of their total effort being devoted to operations of this nature.

279. Naval carrier-borne aircraft were to play an increasing part; yet when the Eastern Fleet had arrived there had been no comprehensive Naval Air shore organisation in India or Ceylon, nor any adequate facilities that the Naval Air Arm could take over. In Ceylon, therefore, the R.A.F. landing-strips at Colombo and Katukurunda, as well as a civil emergency landing-ground at Puttalam, and in Southern India R.A.F. landing-strips at Solur and Coimbatore were taken over and turned into Naval Air stations. Later the R.A.F. station at Cochin was also handed over to the Royal Navy.[1] while a new airfield was constructed at Tambaram. With these airfields, it was possible to build up an efficient shore organisation. Aircraft shipped from the United Kingdom and the United States were delivered at Cochin: where they were assembled, tested in the air, and then ferried to one of the maintenance units at Coimbatore, Katukurunda, or Tambaram, where they were equipped for operations; while aircraft in reserve for operational requirements were stored and held at Solur.

280. In mid-April, Admiral King, U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, requested that the Eastern Fleet should carry out an assault on some suitable target in the Andamans–Nicobars area, with the object of pinning down Japanese air and surface forces in the Singapore area while General MacArthur's forces made an amphibious assault on Hollandia, on the north coast of Netherlands New Guinea. Admiral Somerville had already planned an air and surface attack on the island air base of Sabang, at the northern end of Sumatra (Operation COCKPIT); and this was carried out by the Allied fleet. A month later, the SARATOGA and her destroyers were recalled to the Pacific; and opportunity was taken to carry out a strike with the whole fleet against the oil refinery and engineering works at Sourabaya (Operation TRANSOM).[2] This strike was the first very long operation of the Eastern Fleet, which steamed for some 7,000 miles with steam on the main engines for 22 days without any major engine-room defects. Since Java was in the South-West Pacific theatre, the communique was issued by General MacArthur.

281. In June, Admiral King requested that further operations should be carried out in the Malaya–Andamans area, to maintain pressure on Japanese mobile forces and assist the U.S. Pacific Fleet; a carrier-borne air strike was therefore carried out against Port Blair in the Andaman Islands (Operation PEDAL). By the end of June, the 4th and 8th Submarine Flotillas, in addition to transporting guerrillas, had between them sunk a Japanese cruiser (the KUMA), two enemy submarines, and 36,000 tons gross of enemy merchant shipping. Two more fleet carriers, VICTORIOUS and INDOMITABLE, joined the Eastern Fleet in July. As there had been little enemy reaction to carrier-borne air attacks, Admiral Somerville considered it feasible for the fleet to undertake a gun bombardment of one of the outer Japanese bases; I was greatly in favour of this, and agreed that Sabang

[1] The R.A.F. station at China Bay, Ceylon, was also handed over to the Royal Navy in November, 1944 on my direction.

[2] See Chart 'A' opposite.

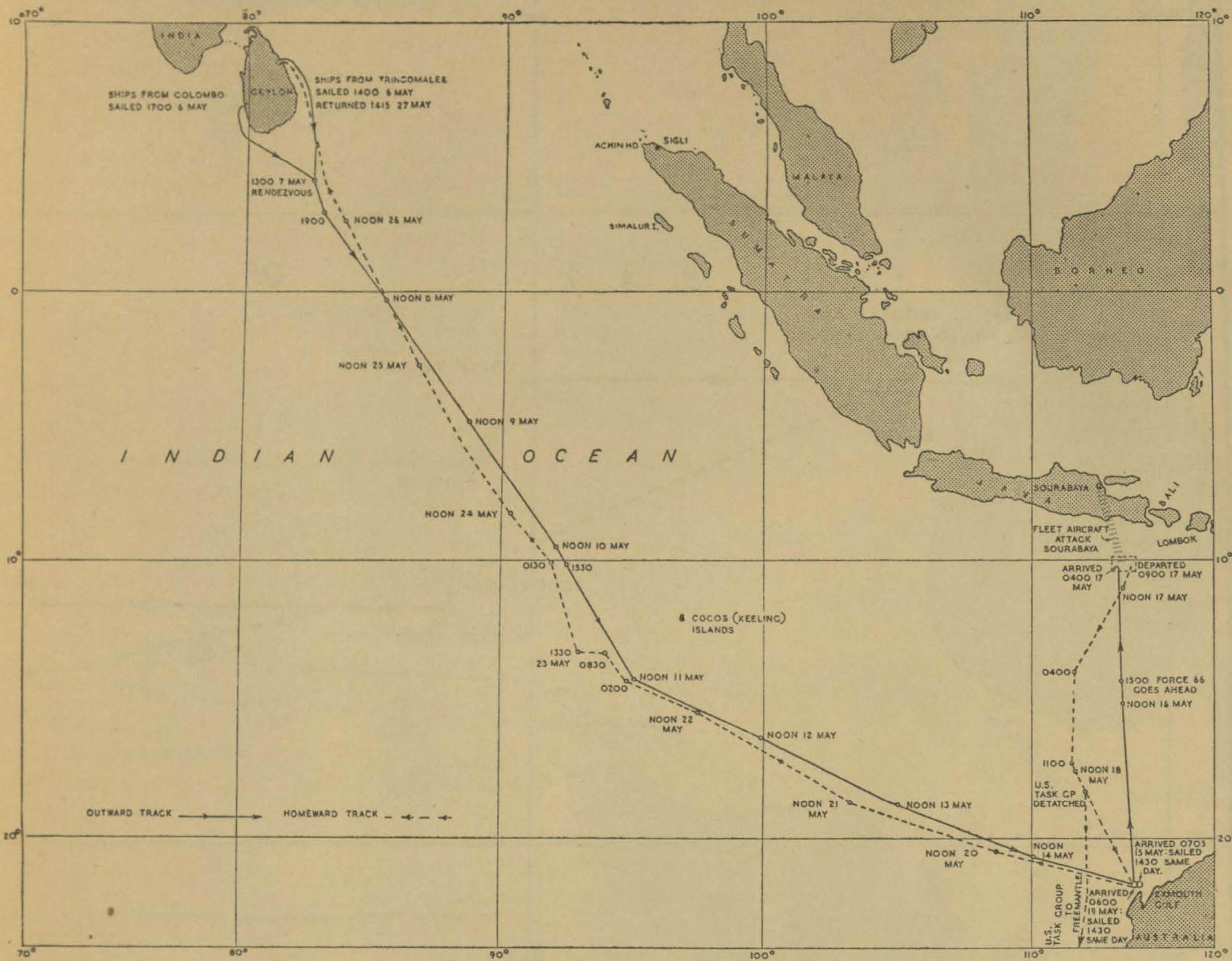



CHART A OPERATION TRANSOM

should again be attacked (Operation CRIMSON).[1] On the 25th July, Admiral Somerville, flying his flag in the QUEEN ELIZABETH, personally led the operation, which did damage to Japanese installations.[2]

282. On the 8th August, the HOWE, one of our latest battleships, arrived at Trincomalee to join the 1st Battle Squadron. On the day of her arrival, the 50,000-ton Admiralty floating dock, which had been brought from Bombay to Trincomalee in February and had been used in July for the first time, broke and sank. The battleship VALIANT, which was in the dock at the time, sustained considerable damage and had to leave the station for repairs. At the end of the month, two operations were carried out: one to provide air-sea rescue cover for a 20th U.S. Bomber Command[3] attack on Sumatra (Operation BOOMERANG); the other, a carrier-borne strike on the important cement works at Inda-roeng, near Padang in Sumatra (Operation BANQUET). Opportunity was taken to carry out photographic reconnaissance of the Pagai Islands and the Padang area. The 8th Submarine Flotilla, at this point, sailed for Australia, being replaced at Trincomalee by the 2nd Submarine Flotilla.

283. In September, another carrier-borne air strike was carried out on Sumatra (Operation LIGHT), when Sigli was bombed, and further photographic reconnaissance made. In October, as a further diversionary

[1] See Chart 'B' (pages 90 and 91).
[2] The battleships VALIANT and RICHELIEU ; the battle cruiser RENOWN ; the fleet carriers ILLUSTRIOUS and VICTORIOUS; the cruisers NIGERIA, KENYA, GAMBIA, CEYLON, CUMBERLAND, PHOEBE and TROMP, and 10 destroyers also took part.
[3] See 'B', paragraph 293.

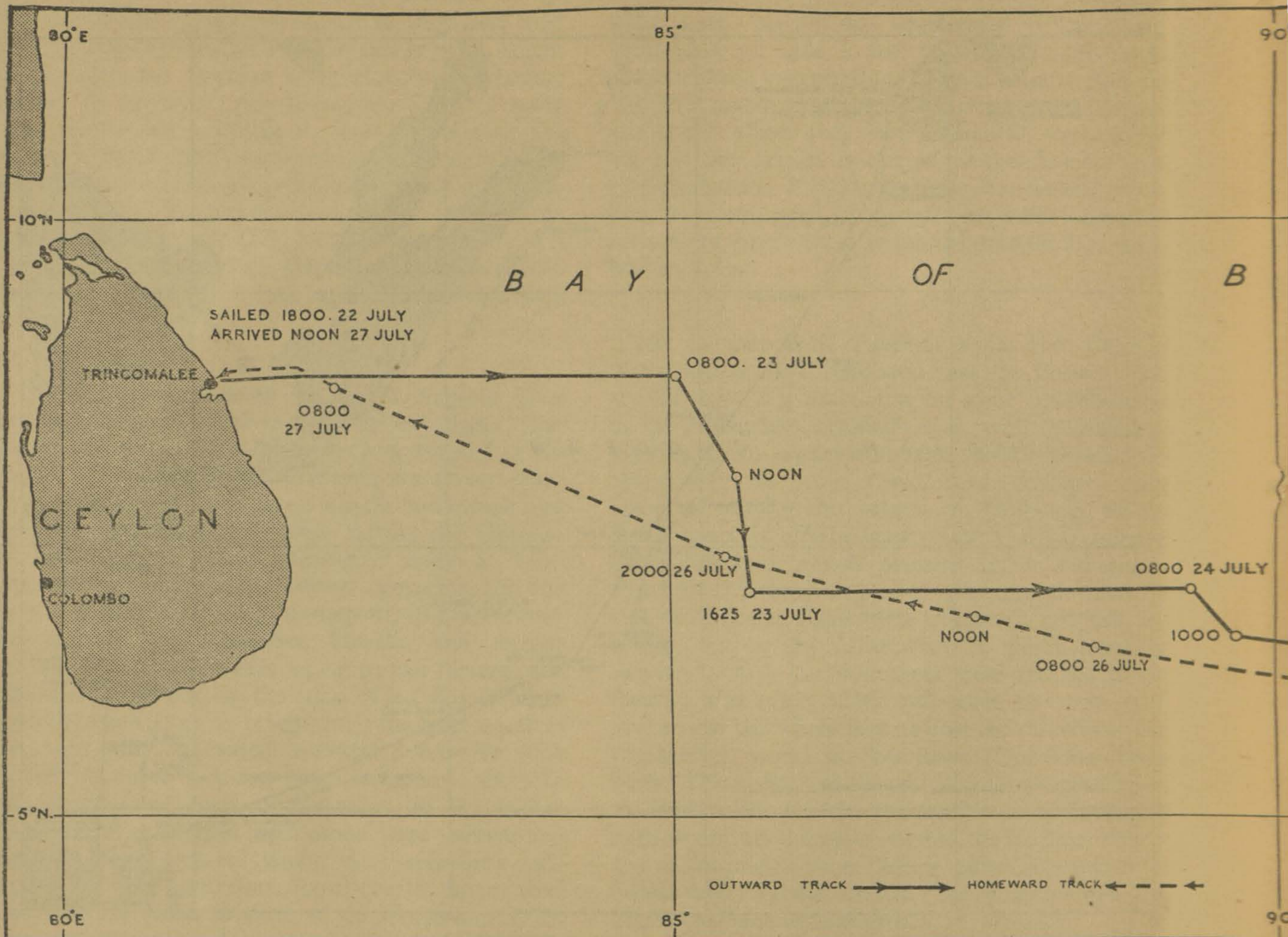
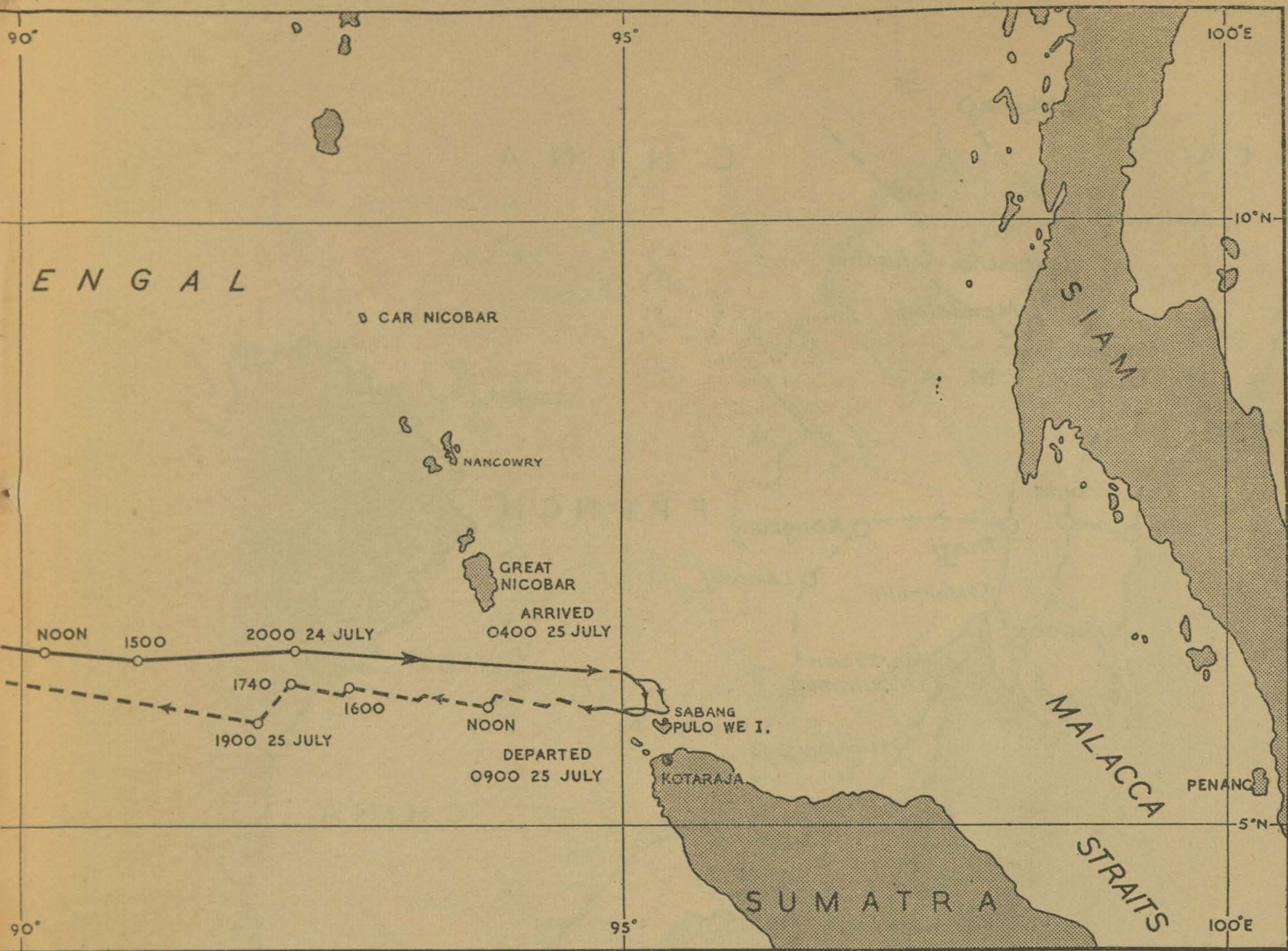



CHART B

attack to assist General MacArthur's invasion of the Philippines: a sustained operation with attacks lasting for more than three days was carried out against the Japanese island bases of Car Nicobar and Nancowry (Operation MILLET). This was designed to mislead the enemy into thinking that landings were imminent; but his reaction was slight, and was mainly confined to ineffective air attacks in the final stages of the operation. At this point, the Japanese Battle Fleet left Singapore for the Pacific, to defend the Philippines in the battle of Leyte.

284. When I was in London in August, the Prime Minister had asked for my views on a proposal by the First Sea Lord, which had the support of the other Chiefs of Staff, that the modern part of the Battle Fleet should be transferred from the Eastern Fleet to the U.S. Fleet in the Pacific. I told Mr. Churchill that I fully agreed, on the understanding that the South-East Asia theatre would retain all available British amphibious assault forces, an adequate number of old battleships for fire support, and a carrier force sufficient for providing air cover and support for amphibious operations—as well as the necessary cruisers, destroyers, etc., for the fleet which would be remaining. On the 18th November, the Chiefs of Staff informed me that it had been decided at the Quebec Conference in September that the modern part of the Eastern Fleet would go to the Pacific; and that this new fleet, which would be known as the British Pacific Fleet, would be under the command of Admiral Fraser. On the 22nd, to my great regret, he left for Australia to take up his new appointment, after only three months in South-East Asia. That part of the




OPERATION CRIMSON

Eastern Fleet which remained was renamed the East Indies Fleet, and was placed under the command of Vice-Admiral (now promoted Admiral) Power.

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### Long-range Air Operations During 1944

285. Throughout 1944, long-range air operations had been carried out at a considerable distance from the battle fronts: ranging over Southern Burma, Siam, the Kra Isthmus, the Malay Peninsula, Singapore, and the Netherlands East Indies.[1] One objective was to destroy the enemy's war potential within Burma itself, by bombing military installations, troop concentrations, formation headquarters, ammunition and supply dumps, and industrial resources. Another was to attack enemy harbours and coastal shipping. When aircraft were presented with an opportunity of attacking warships or merchant ships at sea, these targets were given priority; but as it was difficult to locate shipping at sea, the policy was to bomb ships in harbour, to attack harbour installations, and to lay mines in harbours and approach channels. As a result of this, the enemy's supply system and unloading arrangements were seriously disorganised.

286. The Strategic Air Force laid mines in most of the ports of Southern Burma, on their sea lines of communication; and this caused a great dislocation of transport, as the enemy was poorly supplied with

[1] These were mainly undertaken by the Strategic Air Force; but also by 222 Group, and by the U.S. 20th Bomber Command—neither of which came under its control. See Map 21 (page 93).

Map 20. JAPANESE LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO BURMA



# Map 21. STRATEGIC AIR TARGETS IN S.E.A.C.



efficient mine-sweeping equipment, and there was considerable delay in clearing the harbours. Attacks were also made on enemy shipping; and great assistance was given by Major-General Chennault's 14th U.S.A.A.F., based on China,[1] which carried out widespread attacks in the Gulf of Siam.

287. A third objective of long-range operations was the interruption of enemy supply routes in Southern Burma and Siam.[2] For towards the end of 1943, our mine-laying and the sinking of enemy ocean-going vessels by our submarines and aircraft had already virtually denied the use of Rangoon to the enemy. His sea route to Burma had subsequently been restricted to small-scale coastal shipping in the south, using the Tenasserim ports of Mergui, Tavoy, and Moulmein—all of which had road communication with Rangoon. Supplies from enemy-occupied territory in China which were destined for the Burma Area Army and the garrisons in South-East Asia came by sea to Singapore, Saigon, and Bangkok. Some of the supplies from Singapore continued in small coastal ships; but the remainder, and all those from Saigon and Bangkok, went overland.

288. By October, 1943, the Japanese had finished building a railway from Bangkok to Thanbyuzayat, where it joined the Tenasserim railway to Rangoon; its construction had taken one year, with the forced labour of thousands of British, Australian, American and Dutch prisoners of war, as well as many local civilians.[3] By the beginning of 1944, up to 10,000 tons a month were being transported over this railway as far as Moulmein, and ferried across the Salween to Martaban. From Martaban they were taken by rail to the Sittang River, where they again had to be ferried as the Sittang bridge had been permanently destroyed. Finally, they were distributed by rail: either direct to Mandalay, or to the main Japanese supply base for Burma, at Rangoon—while coasting vessels also undertook trans-shipment to Rangoon from Moulmein.

289. Regular attacks were made by Strategic Air Force on the railway lines and roads running from Bangkok into Burma and down the Malay Peninsula, as well as on the road, rail, and river communications from Rangoon to the north; and these attacks were diversified, so as to prevent the enemy from appreciating the operational pattern. About a quarter of the operations of Strategic Air Force were against railway targets, and all types of bomber aircraft were used: the larger installations at Rangoon, Bangkok and Mandalay being allotted to heavy bombers. Wellingtons, operating by night, were directed against railway centres; Mitchells (B-25) were used by day in railway sweeps and for destroying vital targets—such as the Sittang bridge at Mokpalin (which was permanently kept out of action), the marshalling yards at Bangkok and Moulmein, and the ferry crossings at Mokpalin and Martaban, which were mined. At shorter range, the Rangoon–Myitkyina line was continually attacked, and at least one of the bridges along this railway was always out of commission.

290. General Reconnaissance operations were carried out over a vast sea area, which included the Indian Ocean, the Mozambique Channel, the Gulf of Aden, and the Gulf of Oman; as well as the Bay of Bengal, for the security of which Air Command and Eastern Fleet were jointly responsible. Although in general such operations did not fall within my responsibility, I was immediately concerned with the security of the Bay of Bengal, and of those parts of the Indian Ocean which lay within the boundaries of S.E.A.C.[4] These General Reconnaissance missions were flown by 222 Group as required by the Naval Commander-in-Chief: since vast expanses of ocean had to be patrolled, and the resources of 222 Group were limited, there were not many sightings by aircraft—nevertheless, the enemy submarines (German as well as Japanese) were kept submerged, and away from our shipping lanes.

291. An important aspect of long-range operations was the introduction, and supply, in enemy-occupied territory, of liaison officers engaged in raising and assisting guerrilla forces. This was undertaken by Special Duties Squadrons, which frequently penetrated far into French Indo-China and Siam, and operated down the Malay Peninsula to within 30 miles of Singapore—returning to their base in Bengal.[5] Some of these officers gave great assistance to 221 and 224 Groups: many of them not only indicating targets, but succeeding also in giving detailed reports of the results of our attacks. Other officers also assisted pilots who had been forced to bale out, to return to our own lines.

[1] This was one reason why it was important that the 14th U.S.A.A.F. should be well supplied over the Hump.
[2] See Map 20 (page 92).
[3] The appalling sufferings and the high rate of mortality which the building of this railway entailed should be recorded. For instance, of a party of 7,000 prisoners of war sent from Changi (Singapore) to Siam in April, 1943, 25 per cent. were dead by the end of August and 90 per cent. of the remainder were sick. By December, 40 per cent. of the entire force engaged on the work were dead; the move of the unfit remainder back to Singapore began, and was completed in April. The total of deaths had been approximately 3,100—or 45 per cent. in one year.
[4] So that an overall, inter-service picture of operations in the theatre may be presented, I have been authorised by the Air Ministry to refer in this Report to certain air operations which were not carried out under my command.
[5] These flights were among the longest carried out under war conditions by Liberator (B-24) aircraft.

292. Air-Sea Rescue was carried out under the control of Strategic Air Force; and the rescue launches were supplemented by R.A.F. squadrons, operating Liberators (B-24), Warwicks, Catalina flying-boats, and Sea Otters—as well as by a U.S. squadron, operating amphibian Catalina flying-boats and Super-Fortresses (B-29). These units ranged over the Bay of Bengal and succeeded in effecting rescues of "ditched" crews far out in the open sea: on one occasion more than 800 miles, and on another approximately 1,100 miles, from their base. The Air-Sea Rescue organisation greatly contributed to sustaining the morale of the long-range operational crews who flew over these great expanses.

293. During April and May, when the land fighting was at its height, continuous bombing of enemy communications had taken place: particular emphasis being laid on the disruption of the main road along which supplies were being brought to the enemy divisions attacking Imphal. About three-fifths of this effort was directed against military installations, airfields, dumps, and industrial targets. In attacks on the latter, in Burma and Siam, oil installations were given priority—for example, a concentrated bombing programme was carried out by American daylight bombers on the oil centre of Yenangyaung—and as a result of these attacks, enemy production fell by two-thirds in the first six months of the year. In the Spring, the U.S. 20th Bomber Command undertook strategical operations from India against targets in the Pacific theatre. This Command, which consisted of the first Super-Fortresses (B-29) to be used on operations, was based on airfields in Bengal, and the aircraft refuelled at Trincomalee, or at forward airfields in China, so as to obtain the necessary range. It remained directly under General Arnold in Washington,[1] but its missions were cleared by Major-General Stratemeyer, on behalf of the South-East Asia Command.

294. In June, the Strategic Air Force had undergone changes in organisation and composition which greatly reduced its strength and effectiveness during the monsoon. The U.S. 12th Bombardment Group, of four Mitchell (B-25) squadrons, was transferred to Third T.A.F.—a step that Air Marshal Baldwin had long advocated, and which helped him to add to the attack on enemy communications in Burma. The U.S. 7th Bombardment Group, of four Liberator (B-24) squadrons, was transferred, at the request of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to ferrying petrol (gasoline) over the Hump. The Strategic Air Force now consisted of only its British component: three Liberator (B-24) squadrons, one Wellington squadron, and the Special Duties and Air-Sea Rescue squadrons. As it was not possible to carry out a comprehensive programme with this small force, Major-General Stratemeyer ordered Air Commodore F. J. W. Mellersh[2] to concentrate on targets whose destruction would assist the land forces: in particular, on railway lines running north and south from Pegu; on the Bangkok–Lampang section of the Siam railway; and on shipping and troop concentrations.

295. Although the efforts of the reduced Strategic Air Force were concentrated on Burma, they could only be on a small scale; and the enemy was able to keep his rail and road communications in Southern Burma and Siam open to a great extent, and to move his formations in the rear areas without much difficulty. He was also able to bring in reinforcements and fresh supplies from outside Burma on a greater scale than when the full Strategic Air Force had been operating; and he successfully continued to build up supply dumps in Central Burma.

296. In September, Major-General Stratemeyer laid down separate operational areas for the Allied Air Forces. The Strategic Air Force was allotted all territories south of a line Moulmein–Bassein Peninsula, and east of the Salween, and as far to the east and south as they could reach. Third T.A.F. and 10th U.S.A.A.F. continued to support Fourteenth Army and N.C.A.C. respectively. By this time, the enemy submarine threat had been very greatly reduced. Just before the monsoon, 222 Group had to provide extensive patrols to cover supplies and reinforcements to our troops through ports on the east coast of the Bay of Bengal, which we had had to use to relieve the heavily-loaded land routes. But submarine activity had diminished, and it had been progressively possible to reduce convoy patrols. 222 Group was now free to undertake a far greater number of offensive operations, including the mining of enemy waters and strikes against shipping in the Andaman Sea.

297. At the end of the monsoon, the main effort of Strategic Air Force was directed against long-range targets outside Burma. In accordance with my general policy, Major-General Stratemeyer now gave the Strategic Air Force the following directive, in which objectives were placed in the following order of priority:—

[1] See 'B', paragraph 612.

[2] Who took over command of Strategic Air Force in June, when Brigadier-General Davidson was promoted Major-General and took command of the 10th U.S.A.A.F.

(*a*) Naval and merchant vessels as targets of opportunity;

(*b*) communications into and within Burma, with continued sustained attacks against the Burma–Siam railway and roadway;

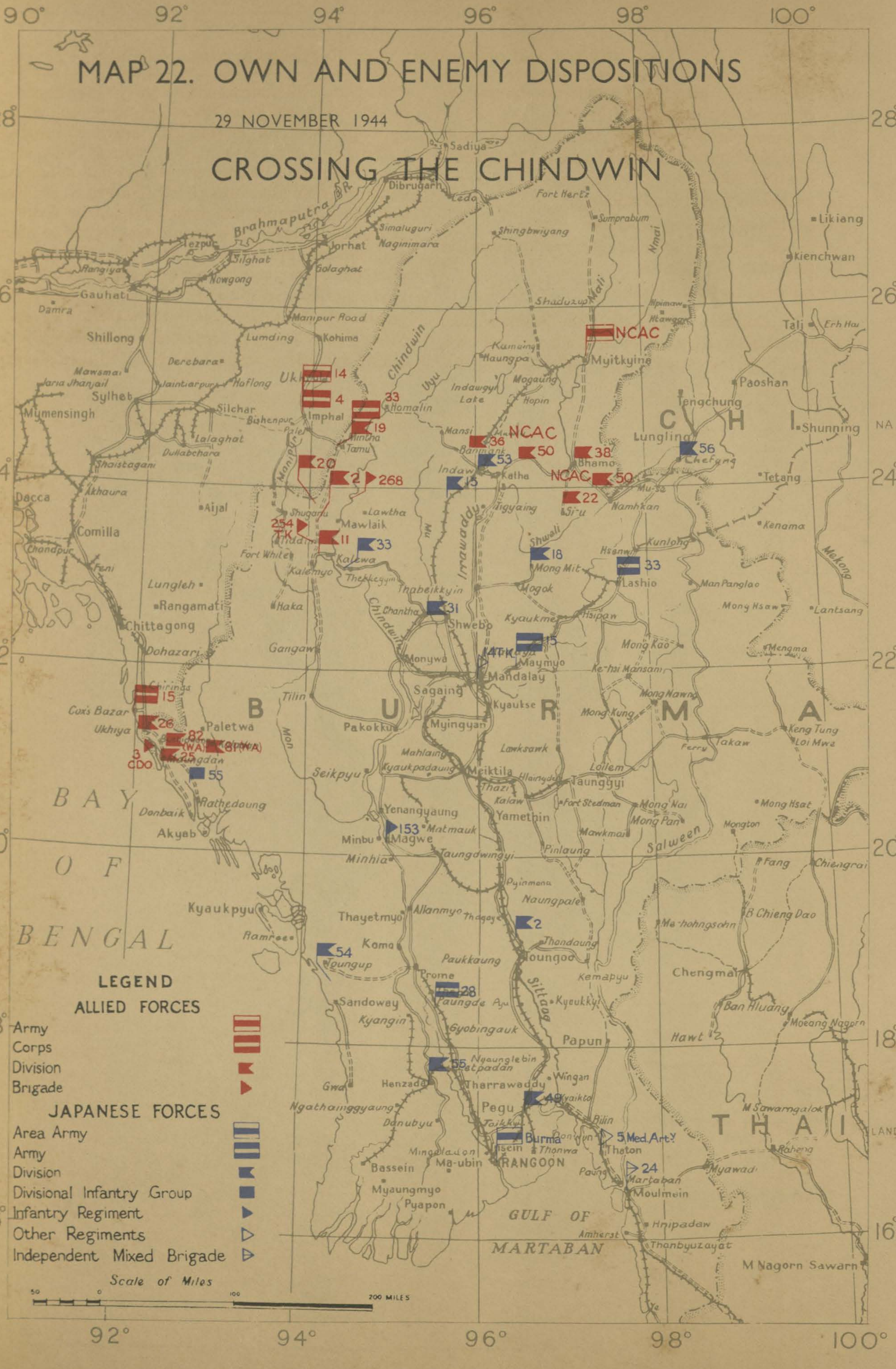
(*c*) enemy air force installations;

(*d*) ports and shipping facilities;

(*e*) depots, dumps, and other military administrative facilities;

(*f*) mine-laying operations.

298. In October, the U.S. 7th Bombardment Group reverted to the control of Strategic Air Force; successful bombing attacks were made on Bangkok, Chieng-Mai, Moulmein and other long-range targets—the most notable being the successful mining of the inner approaches to Penang harbour, which involved a round trip of more than 3,000 miles. In November, two Wellington squadrons which had been re-equipped with Liberators (B-24) returned to the line; and the Liberators had been modified in order to extend their range and carrying capacity for bombing and mining operations. A number of successful operations were carried out on targets in Siam and along the Tenasserim coast; but operations were on a greatly reduced scale, so as to allow the squadrons of Strategic Air Force to concentrate on training for the major operations which were about to take place.




# MAP 22. OWN AND ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

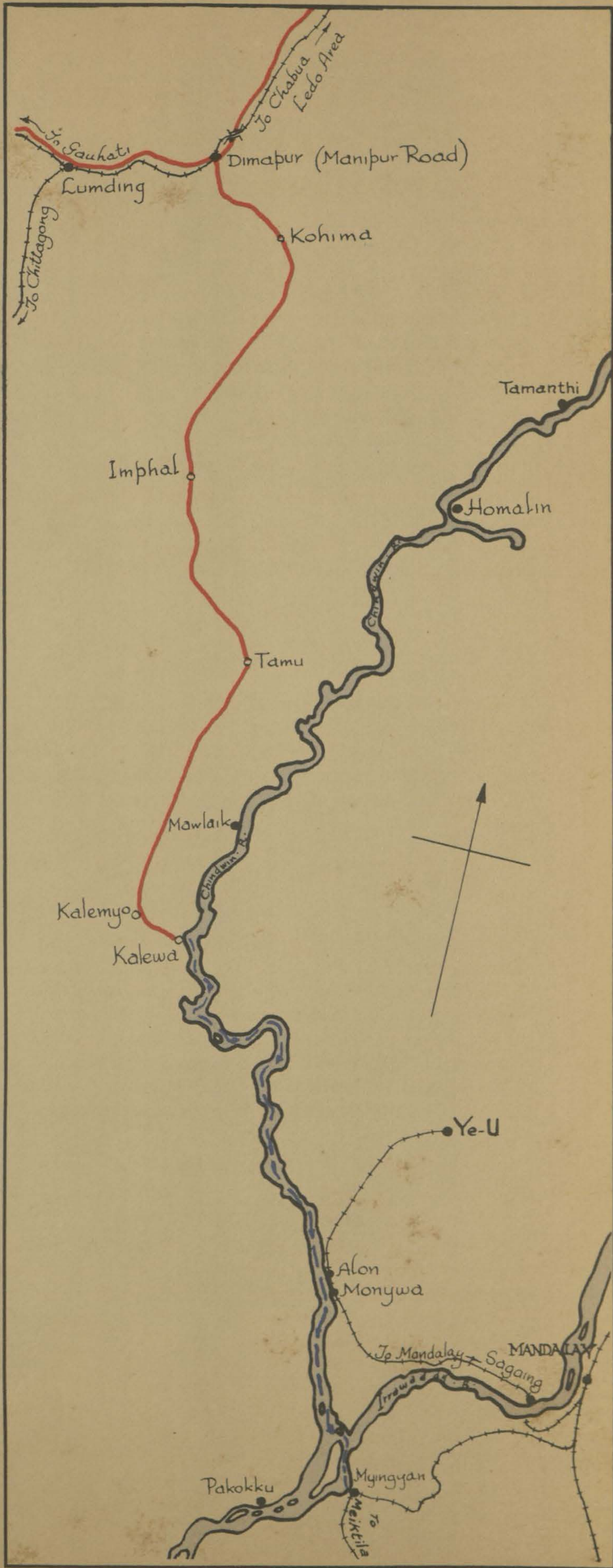
29 NOVEMBER 1944

## CROSSING THE CHINDWIN

Map 23

# LINE OF COMMUNICATION FROM DIMAPUR TO CENTRAL BURMA

OPENED
TO ALON : 1 FEBRUARY 1945
TO MYINGYAN : 26 MARCH 1945




KEY

Road

Railway

Waterway

SCALE

MILES 10 5 0 10 20 30 MILES

# SYNOPSIS

## B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

### SECTION FIVE: DECEMBER 1944 AND JANUARY 1945

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*Page* 99

The Fourteenth Army crosses the Chindwin; Problems of land lines of communication with Central Burma; 33 Corps reaches the Shwebo Plain; 4 Corps makes contact with 36 British Division of N.C.A.C.

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*Page* 101

Japanese plans detected, for evacuating the Shwebo Plain and withdrawing behind the Irrawaddy; Lieut.-General Slim decides to cross the Irrawaddy, and to fight the major battle in the Mandalay–Meiktila plain; Fourteenth Army re-disposed for the crossings, and for a lightning thrust on Meiktila.

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*Page* 104

Return to China of two divisions from N.C.A.C. Transport aircraft diverted to carry them; Bhamo captured; 36 British Division breaks enemy resistance in the "Railway Corridor"; N.C.A.C. forces cross the Irrawaddy at Shwegu; The MARS Brigade takes over the task of cutting the old Burma Road; N.C.A.C. forces reach the Irrawaddy at two more points; Efficiency of U.S. system of Army/Air co-operation in N.C.A.C.

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*Page* 107

Urgent need for sea/air bases in Arakan to supply Fourteenth Army; Preliminary approval received for operation ROMULUS; Inter-Service Headquarters set up at Corps level, for directing amphibious operations in Arakan; Lieut.-General Wedemeyer recommends cancellation of Arakan operations, but Chiefs of Staff approve that they should proceed; Offensive opens in Arakan; Capture of Akyab; Capture of Myebon Peninsula, Kyaukpyu, Cheduba, and a bridgehead at Kangaw; 82 West African Division advances southward to contact the Kangaw bridgehead; Slowing-down of amphibious operations, to permit of a firm base being consolidated.

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*Page* 113

Shortage of transport aircraft for supply of Fourteenth Army; Request to the Chiefs of Staff for 140 aircraft; 145 transport aircraft reinforcements agreed; 33 Corps captures Shwebo, and secures bridgeheads east of the Irrawaddy; remainder of 33 Corps reaches the Irrawaddy; 4 Corps advances down the Gangaw Valley, and also reaches the Irrawaddy.

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Since the re-organisation of the Army Command in November, the Fourteenth Army consisted of only 4 Corps and 33 Corps. 4 Corps Headquarters had returned from India at the end of October and re-opened near Imphal, with 19 Indian Division under command (and 268 Indian Infantry Brigade[1] added shortly afterwards). 19 Indian Division, newly-arrived in Burma, had been stationed in India since it was raised there in 1941, and had not yet been in action. Early in November, routes from the Chindwin eastward to the Railway Corridor had been reconnoitred; and by the 19th, a brigade of 19 Indian Division, supplied entirely by air, had crossed the Chindwin at Sittaung. When it confirmed that the routes were feasible, Headquarters 4 Corps directed the whole of 19 Indian Division on this line of advance; and by the end of November, the whole division was on its way across the river.

300. The main body of 33 Corps, led by 11 East African Division, had pushed eastward from Kalemyo; with the assistance of Hurribombers, it forced the narrow defile of the Myittha River, and reached the Chindwin at Kalewa on the 2nd December. The crossings were reconnoitred by units of the Sea Reconnaissance Unit (an inter-service force of specially trained swimmers which I had raised when Chief of Combined Operations); the river was crossed the following night, and a bridgehead established. Under air attack—for the Japanese realised that this was to be our main land-line of communications—the engineers of 33 Corps completed a Bailey pontoon-bridge of 1,154 feet in 28 working hours, with component parts which had by hook or by crook been transported through the monsoon over the long, difficult line of communication from Dimapur. Engineers of the Fourteenth Army set up boat-yards; and various types of river craft were built,[2] which, lifting some 10 tons apiece, produced a total available river lift of more than 20,000 tons. Flying-boats flew to the Chindwin with engines for the various craft, which included damaged craft captured from the Japanese and repaired.

301. To the north of Kalewa, near Mawlaik, a brigade of 20 Indian Division crossed the river on 3rd December, and struck out eastward over badly-flooded country. The remainder of the division crossed at Kalewa, where in spite of strong enemy opposition the bridgehead had been extended; and by the 19th December, 2 British Division (which had been brought up from Kohima) had also crossed the river through the Kalewa bridgehead, and was relieving 11 East African Division, which was now gradually withdrawn.

302. By mid-December, therefore, having pursued the Fifteenth Japanese Army without respite since the end of June, and prevented it from re-organising during the monsoon or regaining the initiative, we had not only reached the Chindwin, but were across it at Sittaung, Kalewa and Mawlaik in considerable strength.[3] The Fourteenth Army had now carried out its part in Phase 1 of CAPITAL, and was ready to concentrate on Phase 2: the destruction of the enemy's main formations in Central Burma. Meanwhile, I had already directed the Commander-in-Chief on the 15th November to make plans for Phase 3; and particularly to bear in mind the paramount importance of facilitating the subsequent exploitation, by destroying the greatest number of Japanese so as to prevent their withdrawal to Southern Burma.

303. Lieut.-General Slim now had at his disposal 2 British Division; 5, 7, 17, 19 and 20 Indian Divisions; with two tank and two additional infantry brigades. At this time it was calculated that the Fourteenth Army would be faced by five and one-third Japanese divisions, one independent mixed brigade, one tank regiment, about 40,000 lines of communication troops, two Indian National Army divisions, and the bulk of the "Burma Defence Army".[4] If we could have deployed all our formations across the Chindwin at the same time, we could have met the Japanese on fairly equal terms; but it did not seem possible that we could use more than four and two-thirds divisions and the two tank brigades for trans-Chindwin operations, owing to transportation difficulties and the impossibility of supplying a larger force.

304. As the shortage of engineering resources, particularly excavation machines, would prevent the building and maintaining at an all-weather standard of both the Tiddim and Tamu roads (which would

[1] Almost a Light Division in strength (See 'B', footnote to paragraph 106).

[2] Two gunboats, PAMELA and UNA, mounting Bofors and Oerlikon guns, were built, launched and commissioned on the Chindwin—probably the first time that the Army constructed warships for the Royal Navy, though to the design of a Naval constructor. (See 'B', paragraph 479.)

[3] See Map 22 (facing page 96).

[4] See 'B', paragraph 487.

have ultimately led to the Chindwin) it had been decided to concentrate effort on the improvement of the Tamu–Kalemyo–Ye-U road, and work on the Tamu–Kalewa sector had been proceeding behind the advancing troops since October. It had also been decided to push on as rapidly as possible with the pipe-lines; and plans were also now made to use inland water transport on the Chindwin from Kalewa to the railheads of Alon and Myingyan as soon as they were captured and could be developed.[1]

305. In effect, Lieut.-General Slim was faced with the prospect of using a numerically inferior force, operating at the end of precarious lines of communication; while the enemy operated on interior lines of communication, with good roads and rivers, and a railway system which, in spite of our bombing, they were still managing to keep sufficiently open for essential moves, though these were considerably slowed up. Moreover, the air-lift, which would be severely limited at the beginning of the battle, was bound to be yet further reduced as the advance progressed. As the troops drew away from the airfield-bases around Imphal and Chittagong, the load and rate of turn-round of the transport aircraft supplying them would be reduced; and when the ground forces had advanced beyond a radius of 250 miles from the air bases, the lift would begin to become uneconomical. It was, in fact, primarily in order to provide air bases which could supply the Fourteenth Army when it reached Southern Burma, that operations in Arakan were about to be undertaken.[2]

306. Lieut.-General Slim's plan was to fight the main strength of the Japanese Burma Area Army on the Shwebo Plain, north of the loop of the Irrawaddy which ran from east to west between Mandalay and Pakokku. This Plain would be the ground most favourable to ourselves, for in dry weather it would allow us to deploy our armour—and particularly the Sherman tank, to which the enemy had no effective reply—while the loop of the rivers Chindwin and Irrawaddy, which would lie behind the enemy, would be to his disadvantage. Lieut.-General Slim based his plan on three assumptions: that a definite figure for air- and road-lift to the forward troops would be available; that our other forces in Burma could contain some four and two-thirds enemy divisions elsewhere; and that the enemy intended to fight with his main forces north of the Irrawaddy. The plan therefore provided for the concentration of the Fourteenth Army in the Shwebo Plain; and the troops had now to abandon the tactics of jungle warfare, in which they had become so skilled, and adapt themselves to swiftly-moving battles fought in the blazing sun of the flat open country and low hills of Central Burma.

307. Throughout December, the leading formations of the Fourteenth Army advanced eastward from their bridgeheads across the Chindwin. On the 33 Corps front, 2 British Division and advanced elements of 20 Indian Division took Pyingaing on the 24th December, after overcoming stubborn opposition, and proceeded to capture Kaduma on the 30th. On the last day of the year, 2 British Division surprised the Japanese forces at Kabo and captured the Kabo Weir, which controls the irrigation of a large part of the Shwebo Plain, just in time to forestall a demolition party. This gave 33 Corps a firm footing in the Plain.

308. On the 8th December, Lieut.-General Messervy, who had commanded 7 Indian Division, succeeded Lieut.-General Scoones[3] in command of 4 Corps, and moved 4 Corps H.Q. from Imphal to Tamu. On the 4 Corps front, north of 33 Corps and on the extreme left flank of the Fourteenth Army, 19 Indian Division and 268 Indian Infantry Brigade also drove eastward during December. By the 11th, advanced elements of 268 Brigade reached Oil Indaw, where the Brigade gradually established itself; meanwhile, the troops of 19 Indian Division (who were nearly all pre-war regulars) maintained a steady advance. They were moving over exceptionally difficult country, which was almost trackless and studded with enemy rearguards. In the previous Spring, the enemy had built a rough, meandering track from the Railway Corridor to the Chindwin, to assist their attempted invasion of India; but since then the track had fallen into disuse, and long stretches of it had either been completely washed away or overgrown by jungle.[4]

309. Nevertheless, 19 Indian Division maintained steady progress: capturing Pinlebu and Banmauk on the 16th December, Wuntho on the 19th, Kawlin on the 20th, and Kokoggon on the 23rd. In the meantime, on the 16th, a patrol from Banmauk pressed on to Rail Indaw, where it contacted 36 British Division, which formed the western flank of N.C.A.C.—thus

[1] When established, this was the Fourteenth Army's only surface route after the beginning of the monsoon. (See Map 23 facing page 99.)
[2] See 'B', paragraph 343.
[3] On his becoming G.O.C.-in-C., Central Command, India.
[4] Frequently the troops had to manhandle their guns and lorries for miles; at one point, to get round a cliff, they cantilevered the track out on timber supports.

establishing a more or less continuous Allied front from India to the Chinese border. On the 20th, an airstrip for the landing of supplies was opened at Indainggale; and other strips capable of operating both transport aircraft and fighters quickly followed at Taukkyan, Kawlin, Rail Indaw and Kan.

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Early in December, air reconnaissance provided conclusive evidence that the Japanese, contrary to our hope and expectation, were not proposing to fight us in the Shwebo Plain, but were withdrawing across the Irrawaddy. Subsequent interrogation of prisoners and examination of Japanese documents revealed that the withdrawal behind the Irrawaddy to the Mandalay and Meiktila area had already been ordered by the end of September, and had begun at the beginning of October.

311. It seems that as early as July, in anticipation of our carrying out an intensified post-monsoon campaign, the Japanese had begun a general re-disposition of the three armies[1] which composed the Burma Area Army, under Lieut.-General Kawabe. The shuffle had been notable for the number of senior commanders who were transferred to other appointments—including, finally, Lieut.-General Kawabe himself, who had allowed the Fifteenth Japanese Army to make fruitless and costly attacks against Imphal long after it was clear that the original plan had failed. On the 11th September he had been relieved by Lieut.-General (later General) Kimura, an artillery specialist of wide administrative and political experience from Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo; and the new commander arrived in Burma just as this redisposition was being completed—except that the Fifteenth Japanese Army was still retreating in disorder from the Imphal area.

312. Under the re-disposition, the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army was to face 15 Corps in the Arakan; the Fifteenth Japanese Army was responsible for their Central front and was to face 4 and 33 Corps on our Central front and 36 British Division on the N.C.A.C. front (in the Railway Corridor); and the Thirty-third Japanese Army would be responsible for their North-Eastern front which included the Chinese/American part of the N.C.A.C. front and the Yunnan Expeditionary Force. On the Arakan front the Japanese planned to hold the line of the Kaladan River from Akyab to Kyauktaw. The Twenty-eighth Japanese Army, under Lieut.-General Sakurai, had lost 2 Japanese Division from the Bassein area on its transfer in August to the Thirty-third Japanese Army as reinforcement against Allied pressure in the Railway Corridor and on the China border.

313. To replace this division the main strength of 55 Japanese Division had been brought south to the Bassein area from the Kaladan–Mayu sector: only the 55 Japanese Divisional Infantry Group remaining in the Mayu Peninsula to guard against our overland attacks from the north. 54 Japanese Division was now Twenty-eighth Japanese Army's second and only other division: it remained in position with one regiment on Akyab Island, one on Ramree Island and around Taungup, and one on Cheduba Island—but towards the end of the monsoon the last of these troops had been gradually transferred to the mainland around Myebon and Kangaw, and eventually only a few details were left on Cheduba.

314. On their Central front,[2] the Fifteenth Japanese Army Commander, Lieut.-General Mutaguchi, had been transferred in August to Imperial General Headquarters in Toyko and replaced by Lieut.-General Katamura, previously commanding 54 Japanese Division in Arakan. On this front, the Fifteenth Japanese Army hoped to hold the Railway Corridor sufficiently long to enable the Thirty-third Japanese Army to withdraw completely from the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys. Fifteenth Japanese Army's original three divisions, the 15th, 31st, and 33rd, which had withdrawn in disorder after the Imphal–Kohima operations, had been given no chance to re-form during the monsoon. The Railway Corridor was held by 24 Independent Mixed Brigade (which had been rushed north in March to oppose our airborne assault when Fifteenth Japanese Army was committed to the Imphal operation); as well as by 53 Japanese Division, which had been stiffened in July by half of 34 Independent Mixed Brigade, brought in from French Indo-China. As Japanese operations in the Corridor increasingly passed to the defensive, 24 Independent Mixed Brigade was ordered south to Moulmein in August, into Area Army reserve; and 53 Japanese Division, which remained at Mawhun and Pinwe, was transferred from Thirty-third Japanese Army to Fifteenth Japanese Army early in October.

[1] It must be remembered that a Japanese army corresponded to a British corps.

[2] This did not exactly correspond with our own, but included that part of the N.C.A.C. front on which 36 British Division was fighting.

315. On their North-Eastern front[1] the Thirty-third Japanese Army, under Lieut.-General Honda, planned to re-form and dispose itself to meet attacks from Yunnan, and possibly from the Myitkyina area. It consisted of 18 and 56 Japanese Divisions (at this time the strongest operating in Burma), and 2 Japanese Division, recently arrived from Arakan. 18 Japanese Division, which was being gradually forced out of the Hukawng Valley, received some 4,000 fully-trained reinforcements from Japan, and was transferred to the Namhkam–Bhamo area, to prepare against a possible attack from the Myitkyina area. 56 Japanese Division, reinforced by the main strength of 2 Japanese Division, remained on the China border around Lungling and Mangshih; but towards the end of October 2 Japanese Division was withdrawn from their North-Eastern front, towards Mandalay, under the direct command of Burma Area Army.

316. From the evidence which had been available to us of the enemy's redisposition of his forces, we had erroneously concluded that the enemy planned to deny us the "dry belt"—South-West Burma, Central Burma (especially the Shwebo Plain), the Mandalay area, and the Yenangyaung oilfields—and that he hoped, by holding us outside this and away from Rangoon until the next monsoon, to deny the Fourteenth Army an all-weather surface line of communication. We further concluded that the Japanese expected that this would compel us to withdraw behind the Chindwin; in which case it might be possible for them to stage a new offensive, and force us to fight for the defence of India all over again.

317. But we were wrong. Lieut.-General Kimura had at once appreciated, on his arrival, that the defeated 15, 31 and 33 Japanese Divisions—even though reinforced—would not be able to hold us in the dry belt. Within two weeks of having assumed command, he had ordered 31 Japanese Division to hold the Shwebo Plain just long enough for the remainder of Fifteenth Japanese Army to cross the Irrawaddy; it was then to establish itself south-west of Mandalay on both banks of the river. The division would be able to use the natural bastion of the Sagaing Hills, which effectively cover the crossing of the Irrawaddy at Mandalay, as a sally-port from which to counter-attack our forces as they approached the river; at the same time, by occupying the only high ground on the north-west bank, they would be provided with excellent positions from which to observe our movements in the plain.

318. All mention of the general Japanese movement across the Irrawaddy had been excluded from the enemy's signals, which we were at that time intercepting; but apart from the secrecy of the orders no other special action had been taken to conceal it. The Japanese Burma Area Army, as we subsequently discovered, was congratulated by Imperial Rescript on the success of the operation: in any case, it was not until December that the enemy's intention had become apparent to my Intelligence Staff. Immediately the situation was appreciated, Lieut.-General Slim reported that he proposed to change his plan.

319. The new plan was that we should cross the Irrawaddy, and fight the major battle on the further side by the end of February, in the plains around Mandalay and in the low hills around Meiktila. The task of the Fourteenth Army would remain the same; but its accomplishment had now become very much more difficult, for in order to reach the battlefield we now had to cross a great river which the enemy were holding throughout its length in considerable strength. Since we did not possess enough equipment to make a strongly-opposed main crossing feasible, Lieut.-General Slim proposed to make more than one, and to deceive the Japanese as to where the real assault in strength was to take place. He decided that the best way of achieving this was to make a sufficiently strong crossing north of Mandalay to draw the main enemy forces, whilst making the main crossing south of the enemy concentrations guarding the river below Mandalay.

320. Any airborne landing undertaken would have to be on a large scale, since it would have to be made in the midst of a strong Japanese concentration; and all idea of this had to be abandoned, as there was no question of sparing the air-lift for sufficient troops. The air transport situation was now worse than ever, and at this time showed no likelihood of improving: it would clearly not be a sound proposition to remove squadrons from the day-to-day supply of our advancing troops, for which the existing resources were scarcely adequate, and use them for airborne operations of doubtful value.

321. Deciding that operations should be carried out almost entirely overland, Lieut.-General Slim planned to swing 4 Corps from the left to the right flank of Fourteenth Army; move it south down the Gangaw Valley; seize a bridgehead on the Irrawaddy near Pakokku; and then strike south-east with a

[1]The Japanese North-Eastern front covered both fronts on which the Chinese were fighting—N.C.A.C. and Yunnan.

mechanised, armoured, and partly airborne force, at Meiktila and Thazi. These were key points on the Japanese road and rail lines of communication from Mandalay to the south, and were also the centre of five good airfields: their capture would cut off most of Fifteenth and Thirty-third Japanese Armies from their bases in the south.

322. Before 4 Corps carried out its main attack on Meiktila, 33 Corps was to capture the Shwebo–Monywa area and secure a bridgehead over the Irrawaddy to the north of Mandalay. It was hoped that the Japanese, thinking that this was our main blow against their Fifteenth Army, would react sharply; and that until it was too late for them to re-dispose their forces, they would be unaware that the main blow by 33 Corps was to come not from the north, but south-west of Mandalay, and at about the same time as 4 Corps struck at Meiktila further south still. Both Corps were to be prepared to exploit their success by moving quickly south, capturing a sea port in Southern Burma, and opening sea communications before the next monsoon.

323. Lieut.-General Slim's plan, of which Lieut.-General Leese and I entirely approved, was as brilliant in its conception as in its subsequent successful execution; for it laid the foundation for the complete destruction of the Japanese Army in Burma. It was a bold plan, relying for its fulfilment on secrecy, on speed, and on taking great administrative risks. Planning and execution had to be completed in rather less than two months; and so that it should have the best chance of succeeding, our administrative resources on land and in the air were now to be strained to the utmost. The move from Tamu to Pakokku of 4 Corps alone involved the transportation of two full infantry divisions and a tank brigade, over 328 miles of rough road, which was impassable when it rained and about two feet deep in dust in dry weather. The Kalemyo–Pakokku section was now to be improved temporarily to a standard which would allow the infantry and tanks of 4 Corps to pass down it. The whole road would also have to carry the reserves which were needed for an opposed river crossing at Pakokku, as well as the petrol (gasoline) and ammunition required for the dash to Meiktila after the crossing. After these reserves had passed, the Kalemyo–Pakokku section of the road was no longer to be kept repaired.

324. We intended to use the following road communications over the 508-mile stretch to Mandalay from the great base at Dimapur:—

(*a*) the all-weather road from Dimapur to Tamu (206 miles);

(*b*) the Tamu–Kalewa road (112 miles), which was passable;

(*c*) the road from Kalewa to Mandalay (190 miles). In the original plan of campaign in the Central Plain the intention had been to bring the Kalewa–Shwebo section of this road up to all-weather standard before the monsoon; but since engineering units, diverted to the Kalemyo–Pakokku road, could now not be spared for this, it was decided to improve it to fair-weather standard only. The remaining section, from Shwebo to Mandalay, was all-weather but of very bad quality.

From Dimapur to Meiktila, a distance of 573 miles, the road as far as Kalewa would be used—after this, there would be water transport on the Chindwin for 200 miles as far as Myingyan, where there was an all-weather road and railway for the remaining 55 miles to Meiktila.

325. Although the Burma railways would inevitably have been damaged by our own bombing and enemy demolitions, it was hoped that some of the most important sectors of the line (particularly Alon–Ava and Myingyan–Meiktila) could be brought into operation within a reasonable time. Arrangements were made to concentrate railway operating, construction and maintenance companies at Dimapur, from where they could be sent quickly forward, as soon as Fourteenth Army required them; and plans were also made to transport locomotives and rolling-stock from India. The engineers were also given the task of rehabilitating Japanese airfields as soon as these were captured; and they were ordered to build as many subsidiary airfields and airstrips as possible. These would be needed as operational landing-grounds for the close support squadrons of 221 Group; as well as for the reception of the transport aircraft of C.C.T.F., and for the evacuation of wounded in transport and light inter-communication aircraft.

326. For their new tasks, formations were re-allocated to Corps. 4 Corps, besides 7 and 17 Indian Divisions and 255 Indian Tank Brigade, was given the Lushai Brigade and 28 East African Brigade (the latter from Fourteenth Army reserve): all these were in the rear, except the Lushai Brigade which was in contact with the enemy near Gangaw on 4 Corps' eventual route southward to Pakokku. 33 Corps, which was now to control all operations in the Central Plain, retained 2 British Division and 20 Indian Division (which were already advancing in the Plain), and 254 Indian Tank Brigade. It also took over from

4 Corps, 19 Indian Division and 268 Indian Infantry Brigade (which were in the Plain north of Shwebo); while 5 Indian Division, which was being re-organised in Northern Assam, was to remain in Army reserve. Fighter cover over the area of the advance was to be provided by 221 Group, particularly the prevention of air reconnaissance by the enemy. It was an essential part of Lieut.-General Slim's plan that the enemy should remain unaware as long as possible of the thrust at Pakokku and Meiktila. If the Japanese became aware of any movement in the Gangaw Valley,[1] it was hoped that they would assume this to be an attempt on our part to divert attention from our attack on Mandalay from the north.

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At the beginning of December, there had been just sufficient transport aircraft to maintain the Fourteenth Army in their advance; and to build up the minimum necessary reserve of ammunition, supplies, and equipment which would now be required for crossing the Irrawaddy and fighting the subsequent battle. But on the 10th December, I had had to fly two Chinese divisions from the N.C.A.C. front to China,[2] at the Generalissimo's request; as well as three Combat Cargo squadrons, which were among the aircraft allotted to the Fourteenth Army for day-to-day maintenance, and the two Air Commando troop carrier squadrons, had to be diverted temporarily to the China run. Eastern Air Command put this move into effect so promptly that it had begun before any warning reached Fourteenth Army.

328. The situation in China had been deteriorating all through November. In the Kweilin–Liuchow area, the Japanese, though fighting across very difficult country and against numerically superior forces, had advanced 500 miles from Yochow to Liuchow in the last five months; and in doing so, they had over-run the American forward air bases in Central and South-Eastern China—greatly reducing the capacity of the 14th U.S.A.A.F. to attack the enemy's inner shipping lanes around the China coast. Lack of reliable Intelligence made it difficult to assess what the enemy's objective might be in this offensive, or to make an accurate appreciation of the potential danger.

329. Lieut.-General Wedemeyer, on his arrival in the China theatre late in October, to relieve General Stilwell as Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo, had taken a very serious view of this Japanese offensive. He considered that, as the efficiency of the Chinese Army had been impaired by the heavy losses in men and material that it had sustained, the Japanese might continue their attack on a large scale as far as Kweiyang, and then advance either on Kunming, or on Chungking. If Kunming were to fall, the China theatre would lose the base on which the whole strategic plan of air and land supply to China mainly depended; if Chungking fell, the war-time capital would be lost, and a grave threat to national morale would result. Lieut.-General Wedemeyer feared, in fact, that if either Kunming or Chungking were captured by the Japanese, we might be faced with the complete collapse of the Generalissimo's armies and the loss of most of the American air bases in China.

330. My Director of Intelligence assured me that, from all the evidence that was available to him, he considered such a *débâcle* most unlikely to occur; but I naturally had to accept Lieut.-General Wedemeyer's opinion. He had prepared a full and careful appreciation, not only of the situation in the China theatre, but also of the situation, as he saw it, in the South-East Asia Command, where he himself had until recently been my Deputy Chief of Staff; and a summary of these two appreciations had been sent to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, while I sent an appreciation of the situation in my own theatre to the British Chiefs of Staff (repeating this, as usual, to the Joint Staff Mission in Washington).

331. In the meantime, I fully accepted the seriousness of the situation, as reported by Lieut.-General Wedemeyer; and although I realised that the removal of even two divisions from our low-priority theatre might seriously affect the time factor of the overall campaign, I immediately agreed to the transfer and ordered it to be carried out. 14 and 22 Chinese Divisions were the ones chosen to go: and in addition to the transfer of the three Combat Cargo squadrons and the temporary diversion of the two Air Commando troop carrier squadrons, a small number of heavy bombers was also temporarily diverted from Burma to assist operations in the China theatre.

332. In approving this action, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff stipulated that the two divisions should be chosen so as to cause the least interference with operations in Northern Burma. Lieut.-General Wedemeyer was also authorised to call for any air resources, including transport aircraft, which might be required

[1] See 'B', paragraph 321.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 331.

for moving and supporting these two divisions, or to meet any other requirements arising from the crisis in China. The British Chiefs of Staff said that they had no option but to agree to the move, but they did not agree that Lieut.-General Wedemeyer should be given *carte blanche* to call on aircraft from South-East Asia. Accordingly, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff instructed him not to call on transport aircraft urgently required and actively employed on the supply of ground forces in S.E.A.C., unless it were found impossible to produce any from other sources. Lieut.-General Wedemeyer intimated that he might have to call for more Combat Cargo squadrons; but I requested that the transfer of transport aircraft should be limited to the three Combat Cargo squadrons already sent, and that these three should be returned before the 1st March.

333. When I next saw Lieut.-General Wedemeyer,[1] he told me that he had been very strongly urged at this time to request the return to China by air of the whole of the Chinese Army in India. He had consulted Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart, telling him that the Generalissimo and all his advisers considered that this should be done; Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart had agreed that the situation in China was so serious that the return of the Chinese divisions would be justified. Lieut.-General Wedemeyer, however, realising that this would not only completely wreck the Burma campaign but would expose his own air-supply route over the Hump to the danger of interruption, persuaded the Generalissimo to reduce his demand in the first instance to only two divisions. Even so, Lieut.-General Slim considered that the diversion of aircraft had retarded the campaign by two or three weeks: which not only gave extra time to the Japanese build-up against our attack, but also reduced our chances of reaching Rangoon before the monsoon set in—and this point should be borne in mind when considering the very narrow margin with which this was actually accomplished.

334. On the N.C.A.C. front, the transfer to China of 14 and 22 Chinese Divisions, which had been chosen as the ones whose withdrawal would be the least disadvantageous, had of course had an immediate effect on Lieut.-General Sultan's operations. Throughout November, the three-pronged thrust had continued unabated.[2] On the eastern axis, the First Chinese Army, which enjoyed overwhelming superiority in numbers and powerful air-support, had made steady progress against the defences of Bhamo, which by the middle of November had been entirely surrounded. The town, like Myitkyina, occupies a position of considerable natural strength: its approaches being swampy (excepting where causeways had been built to carry the main roads leading in and out of the town), and most of its buildings being substantial and well suited to defensive action, since they could only be assaulted with heavy artillery and air-support. Bhamo was important to us because it dominates a defile in the Irrawaddy Valley and commands, in addition to other roads and tracks, the road to Namhkam and Wanting, which was the sector along which it was intended that the N.C.A.C. and Yunnan forces should establish contact. The enemy had been preparing the defence of Bhamo since the Spring, along three main lines: the first, which had been expected to delay our advance until the end of October, covered the low hills around Nalong and the Irrawaddy Valley to the south; the second was intended to guard Myothit and the crossing of the Taiping River until mid-November; while the third (at the hard core of resistance) was to be in and around Bhamo itself, where the Japanese planned to hold out until the end of December.

335. On the 29th November, Momauk fell; and at the end of the month the airstrip, north of the town, had been captured and quickly brought into use. While 38 Chinese Division concentrated on the reduction of Bhamo (which was garrisoned by the Reconnaissance Regiment of 2 Japanese Division), 30 Chinese Division by-passed the town to the east and advanced southward towards Namhkam, turning back a relieving force which the Japanese were trying to bring in from the south. In the second week of December, the enemy, considering the position untenable, decided to break out to the south with his remaining forces—a manoeuvre in which he substantially succeeded—and on the 15th, 38 Chinese Division occupied the town. Consequently, we secured Bhamo two weeks or more before the enemy had been prepared to let us do this; but, far more important, 30 Chinese Division had succeeded meanwhile in by-passing the town and advancing towards Namhkam.

336. On the western axis, 36 British Division (reinforced from India by an Indian brigade) had captured Mawlu and Pinwe, put an end to Japanese resistance in the Railway Corridor, captured Rail Indaw on the 10th December, and Katha (on the Irrawaddy) on the following day. They were then ordered to cross the river (which they did at Katha with hardly any opposition towards the end of the month) and then

[1] At a meeting at Myitkyina on the 16th January.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 245.

to advance south-eastward to the old Burma Road around Kyaukme.

337. On the central axis, 22 Chinese Division, leading the Sixth Chinese Army, had crossed the Irrawaddy at Shwegu and had reached the Si-U area early in December. Lieut.-General Sultan had intended that, as soon as this area was cleared, 22 Chinese Division should advance eastward and cut the old Burma Road in the Hosi area, immediately south-east of Namhkam; so that a force might be interposed between the Japanese, to the south, and the First Chinese Army which was advancing from Bhamo to join up with the Chinese Expeditionary Force from Yunnan. 22 Chinese Division, moreover, would have been well placed to assist the overall strategic plan; for it could have advanced in strength, if required to do so by Lieut.-General Leese, either towards Lashio or towards Mandalay.

338. At this point, however, it was withdrawn and returned to China (together with 14 Division, which was in reserve and had elements training at Myitkyina). The immediate commitments of 22 Chinese Division were taken over by the MARS Brigade:[1] who were ordered to clear up the Si-U area and proceed to cut the old Burma Road between Wanting and Lashio. Unfortunately, as a result of the swift Chinese advance through Bhamo on to Namhkam, it was too late to stop the main Japanese retreat southward along this road. By the middle of December, however, when the two divisions were removed to China, the aim of Lieut.-General Sultan's three-pronged thrust had been achieved. 36 British Division had taken Katha; the Sixth Chinese Army had reached Shwegu; and the First Chinese Army had captured Bhamo—which meant that N.C.A.C. forces were firmly established on the Irrawaddy at three key points, and were within sight of completing their part in Phase 1 of CAPITAL. Incidentally, the contact established between 36 British Division and 19 Indian Division at Rail Indaw on the 16th December,[2] together with the proximity of the Yunnan Force on the left flank of N.C.A.C., not only established a more or less continuous Allied front from India to China, but had also brought Lieut.-General Sultan within measurable distance of establishing road communication with China.

339. As in Arakan, and on the Central front, the scale and speed of the advance of the N.C.A.C. forces were determined largely by the maintenance of air superiority, and by the confidence of the land forces in the efficiency of their air-supply. Major-General F. W. Festing, the Commander of 36 British Division relied so confidently on this, that he had decided to hold only the bare reserve of ammunition and food with the combat troops, and in the space of three weeks holdings had been reduced from fifteen to one-and-a-half days' supplies—and if this had not been done, the speed of his division's advance would have been considerably reduced.

340. As the campaign progressed, the Americans had developed a most efficient system of air-supply; and a remarkably high standard of Army/Air co-operation had been attained by well-staffed, well-equipped units, provided with excellent wireless communications. An air unit would be allotted specifically to the support of one land formation: this afforded close personal co-operation and enabled the preparation in advance of "daily standards", at the appropriate air-base. Pilots "on a drop" would be briefed in the air by radio, by the formation "Q" (G-4) staff; and this ensured that the dropping of supplies was co-ordinated with the progress of the battle.

341. In the elaborate use of wireless communication, and the exploitation of tactical air superiority, the technique adopted on this front—though basically the same as on the others—was more advanced. One of the main features of this technique was the use of the air-gunner observation-posts for directing bombers or front-gunned aircraft onto their targets, from the air. If briefing from the ground alone had been relied on, great difficulty would have been experienced in identifying enemy positions in thick jungle, which presented few natural features that could be easily recognised. But air-gunner observation post officers specialised in the knowledge of particular areas, and managed to achieve remarkable proficiency: a simple grid system for marking air photographs was also evolved, and this enabled both ground and air forces to identify a common target with ease.

342. Air superiority had been established on this front, as on the others; and the ground forces enjoyed close support on a large scale from the Lightnings (P-38), Thunderbolts (P-47), and Mitchells (B-25) of the 10th U.S.A.A.F.—the scale of tactical air-support being limited only by the speed with which the ground forces drew away from the air-bases, and by the restrictions that the rough jungle country imposed on the construction of forward airfields.

[1] For composition see 'B', paragraph 244.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 309.

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343. Supply difficulties would increase in direct proportion to the length and speed of the advance: because the air-supply squadrons would be operating further and further from their bases, at a time when the surface lines of communication were being further and further stretched. Paradoxically, therefore, the need for air-supply would become most urgent just when it would be most uneconomical to provide it—unless the squadrons could be based further south than was at present possible. The economical range of air-supply for Dakotas (C-47) is only some 250 miles from the base,[1] for beyond this range part of the pay-load has to be sacrificed to carry the necessary additional fuel for the return trip. Provision had to be made in the plan of the advance of Fourteenth Army for new air-bases much further south than the existing ones in Assam. In fact, unless air-bases (situated where supplies could be brought to them without overloading the Assam L. of C.) were provided in good time, Fourteenth Army would be held up indefinitely when it got beyond Meiktila—which was already outside the 250-mile radius from the Assam air-bases. The securing and development of sea/air bases on the Arakan coast had consequently now become the overriding consideration in all planning for 15 Corps operations.

344. On the 8th November, I had issued a directive to the Commanders-in-Chief for operations to clear Arakan (Operation ROMULUS);[2] and ultimately to capture Akyab (Operation TALON), by amphibious assault, not later than the end of January. On the 15th November, 15 Corps, which had passed out of Fourteenth Army into the direct command of A.L.F.S.E.A., was ordered:—

(*a*) to clear Arakan to a line Akyab–Minbya as soon as possible, in order to release troops for other operations;

(*b*) to secure the area Chittagong–Cox's Bazaar;

(*c*) to carry out a land advance down the Mayu Peninsula, Kalapanzin Valley and Kaladan Valley, in order to destroy or drive out the Japanese from the area north of a line Foul Point–Kudaung Island–Minbya. This advance was to begin as soon as possible;

(*d*) on or about the 15th January, to provide troops for an amphibious assault on Akyab Island, which was to be supported by a sea and air bombardment; and

(*e*) to consolidate and secure firmly the area north of the general line Akyab–Minbya.

Apart from enabling us to establish the airfields necessary for the Fourteenth Army advance, the clearance of Arakan would drive the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army out of the area, and release 15 Corps, 224 Group, and Force "W"[3] for further amphibious operations: it would also contain enemy forces, during these operations, which might otherwise be used against the Fourteenth Army in Central Burma.

345. On the 17th November, the Chiefs of Staff telegraphed that they approved in principle these operations for the clearance of Arakan, which I had recommended to them after the meeting at Cairo in October. In asking for definite plans, they re-emphasised that my primary task was to clear Burma. As regards the Kra Isthmus operation, which I had recommended at the same time, they considered that the prolongation of the war in Europe—with the consequent delay in re-deploying reinforcements promised to us—might make this a hampering and even dangerous commitment, which might result in our having to remain there and in Burma as well. The Chiefs of Staff expressed the hope, also, that the plan for developing the Cocos Islands would be completed by the 1st June, 1945. This plan, which had been discussed on my visit to London in August, and again at the Quebec Conference in September, was favoured both by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the British Chiefs of Staff; for the Islands would provide an intermediate staging-base for landing-craft and aircraft between Ceylon and the South-West Pacific; as well as a useful base for photographic and general reconnaissance, for diversionary activities, and for eventual operations against the Malaya–Netherlands East Indies barrier.

346. By the 27th November, the Force Commanders had completed their plans for ROMULUS and TALON. Operation ROMULUS was to begin on or about the 10th December, when the ground would have dried sufficiently to allow the use of tanks, and when the fair-weather strips would be in a condition for the supporting squadrons to use them. The main body of 15 Corps, assisted by the Royal Navy, would clear the Mayu Peninsula down to Foul Point, at the southernmost tip, immediately north of Akyab; and the amphibious assault on Akyab would be made by

[1] See Map 24 (facing page 112).
[2] See 'B', paragraph 265 (*b*).

[3] The Amphibious Force of the Eastern Fleet (See 'B', paragraph 349).

an amphibious force approaching from the south (against what we at that time expected would be strong opposition). D-Day for TALON could not be definitely decided at this stage, since it depended on the speed of ROMULUS; but the 18th February was set as a provisional date—later than I had proposed in my directive. On the 30th November, having examined the Force Commanders' plans with my Commanders-in Chief, I gave them my approval.

347. An inter-service Headquarters had been set up at Cox's Bazaar, consisting of H.Q. 15 Corps, H.Q. 224 Group, and H.Q. Force 64 of the East Indies Fleet.[1] Lieut.-General Christison had under command:—

25 Indian Division;

26 Indian Division (which was being withdrawn into reserve south of Cox's Bazaar in order to rest and prepare to take part in combined operations against Akyab);

81 West African Division;

82 West African Division (which was taking over from 26 Indian Division);

50 Indian Tank Brigade (which was just arriving in Arakan);

22 East African Brigade (which was due to arrive from Ceylon); and

3 Commando Brigade.

348. Air Vice-Marshal The Earl of Bandon had under command 224 Group (which at this time consisted of 901, 902, 903 and 904 Wings, deployed at Chiringa, Chittagong, Comilla and Cox's Bazaar respectively); there was also a transport squadron based on the Chittagong area, under the command of C.C.T.F., which would wholly supply 81 West African Division and partially supply the others. On the 3rd December, Major-General Stratemeyer placed the U.S. 12th Bombardment Group under the operational control of Air Vice-Marshal Bandon, with instructions that it should be used primarily for close support of the land and amphibious operations, and secondarily for long-range strikes against strategic targets in Southern Burma.

349. Force 64 had under command: the destroyers NAPIER (Captain D. 7)[2] and NEPAL; the Arakan coastal forces, which had begun to operate again in October and had already done useful work in sinking enemy coastal craft and assisting in guerrilla operations; all minesweepers and landing-craft in Arakan; and the Combined Operations Pilotage Parties (C.O.P.Ps.) in the area. Early in December, it was decided that Rear-Admiral B. C. S. Martin, Flag Officer Force "W", should take over from Force 64 at Corps level; and he was sent with his staff to Cox's Bazaar to work with Lieut.-General Christison and Air Vice-Marshal Bandon. Force 64, which would now be working on a Divisional level under Flag Officer Force "W", set up its Headquarters alongside that of 26 Indian Division, where there was also R.A.F. representation.

350. On the 4th December, Lieut.-General Wedemeyer (who, as my late Deputy Chief of Staff, knew our future plans) telegraphed to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff that in his opinion Phases 2 and 3 of CAPITAL could still be carried out with our remaining resources; he also recommended that I should be told to cancel the Arakan operations, which were imminent.[3] I informed the British Chiefs of Staff that my Commanders-in-Chief and I entirely disagreed with Lieut.-General Wedemeyer's conclusions; that the few transport aircraft at present being used to supply 15 Corps would in any case be required for day-to-day maintenance, whether the Arakan operations were carried out or not; and that the cancellation of these operations would not release more than one division for CAPITAL—whereas their success would make it possible to clear the whole of Arakan, and release an entire corps of three divisions together with many administrative units.

351. I insisted that not only was it impossible to send any more transport aircraft to China; but it was probable that, if the three Combat Cargo squadrons transferred from N.C.A.C. were not replaced by the 1st March, the Fourteenth Army's successful advance might be halted, and they might even be forced to withdraw. It was evident, also, that if we did not establish air-bases in Arakan, all hope of supplying the Fourteenth Army by air as far as Rangoon would have to be abandoned.[4]

352. Japanese intentions in China were still obscure. The enemy had withdrawn in some sectors, and was obviously being hampered by administrative difficulties; and it seemed that our Intelligence forecast had been correct and that their advance on Kweiyang was being abandoned, although there was still a potential threat to the town. It seemed most unlikely, however, even if their administrative difficulties were solved, that the Japanese would advance further than

[1] Under Captain D. C. Hill, R.N.

[2] Captain D.7 = Captain commanding 7th Destroyer Flotilla, Royal Australian Navy (See Annexure 9, page 262).

[3] See 'B' paragraph 330.

[4] I did not, however, report this last consideration, not wishing at this stage to raise hopes of so important an advance in Central Burma.

Kweiyang: firstly, because we were about to reopen the land route to China (which would enable Kunming to be reinforced by road as well as by air), and our pipe-line was coming into operation; secondly, because American operations in the Pacific would soon divert the enemy's attention from the interior of China to the coast. The Chiefs of Staff agreed that the Arakan operations should proceed as planned. They accepted my suggestions for limiting the transfer of aircraft to China; and agreed that the whole position should be reviewed towards the end of January, when the situation in Burma and in China would have become clearer.

353. The Arakan offensive was opened on the Mayu Peninsula on the 12th December, by 25 Indian Division,[1] supported by 81 West African Division in the Kaladan Valley and 82 West African Division in the Kalapanzin Valley. On the 15th, 82 West African Division, having moved forward from positions north and north-west of Buthidaung, captured the town; and on the same day established a bridgehead on the east bank of the Kalapanzin, which gave us control of the Maungdaw–Buthidaung road. The river craft, of which there were about 650, which were required to support 25 Indian Division in the operations east of the Mayu Range, were transported through the Tunnels to Buthidaung, and then launched on the Kalapanzin—the whole movement being completed by the 21st December.

354. In the meantime, 81 West African Division was advancing steadily through the difficult country of the Kaladan Valley. In the previous Spring, when they had moved down the west bank of the Kaladan through flat open country, they had found themselves at considerable disadvantage and had suffered a reverse at Kyauktaw.[2] This time, they were to outflank Kyauktaw and Thayettabin (where the enemy was concentrating most of his forces[3]) in the east with the main body of the division; while a holding force remained on the west bank to act as a flank and rear guard to the main force, and to deceive the enemy as to the direction of the main thrust. Since the Japanese had a great advantage in number and weight of guns at this point, the division proceeded to conduct a series of harassing and outflanking movements through the dense jungle of the hilly country east of the Valley, where enemy strength in artillery was least effective. Although the density of the jungle made it seldom possible for the squadrons of 224 Group (which now included four Royal Indian Air Force squadrons) to provide the division with effective tactical support, these outflanking moves succeeded, and the division was able to reach Thanada while the enemy were still concentrated north of Thayettabin, expecting to fight us there.

355. In general, the Arakan consists of tangled jungle-covered hills, which run down to a narrow coastal strip of paddy-fields or mangrove swamps, which are highly malarial and heavily infested by the most virulent type of mosquito. The hills and coastal strip are intersected by hundreds of tidal creeks (or chaungs), which are often many miles long, but are mostly unfordable and offer very few landing-points; and such as existed were strongly defended by the enemy. Since there is not a single beach along the 100-mile stretch of coast from Taungup to Akyab, these chaungs constituted the only means of access to the hinterland.

356. In the matter of overland communications, the Japanese had the advantage.[4] From their base in the Irrawaddy Valley they commanded two moderately good routes: an old road running from Prome to Taungup, over the Taungup Pass; and a new one over the An Pass from Minbu to An, which was almost completed. This new road was linked to the coast road at Tamandu; while from Taungup a coastal road ran southward to Sandoway and Gwa, and northward to Ru-ywa, Kangaw and Hpontha. In addition to the mouths of every river and chaung from Taungup to Akyab (in which inland water transport operated), the enemy controlled the two land lines of communication (partly road and partly track) into the Kalapanzin Valley. One of these ran northward from Akyab via Kudaung Island (crossing the various chaungs by ferries); the other ran from the Kaladan Valley at Kyauktaw, crossed the mountains of Kanzauk, and came down into the Kalapanzin Valley at Htizwe. There was also an indifferent road running northward from Myebon to Kyauktaw via Minbya and Myohaung (again with ferry crossings over the chaungs); and in Myebon the enemy possessed a small but valuable anchorage through which he could pass traffic from the sea to the hinterland.

357. The only roads along which 15 Corps would be able to move military traffic were the road from Chittagong to Foul Point via Taungbro, Bawli Bazaar,

[1] This division included 51 Indian Infantry Brigade, the first all-Indian brigade to take part in an operation of war. An Indian infantry brigade normally consisted of two Indian and one British battalions; but 51 Brigade, under the command of Brigadier K. S. Thimayya, had three Indian battalions, all under Indian commanding officers.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 89.

[3] The Mayu Peninsula was held by 55 Japanese Divisional Infantry Group, under Major-General Sakurai, who had led the unsuccessful offensive in Arakan in the Spring.

[4] See Map 3 (before page 1).

Maungdaw, Buthdiaung and Myinbu; a track, also leading to Foul Point, which left this road at Maungdaw and ran along the coastal strip; and the jeep track linking Chiringa with Paletwa, at the head of the Kaladan Valley. But our poverty in land lines of communication would be more than offset by our ability to operate virtually unopposed at sea and in the air; for the advances down the coast would be supplied and supported from the sea, while we could operate inland water transport on the Kalapanzin River without fear of enemy air attacks. Throughout December, the advance went well in every sector; and invaluable support was given by Force 64, which carried out sea bombardments and supplied the troops from Landing-Craft, Mechanised, and Landing-Craft, Tank, carrying guns and tanks as well as supplies and ammunition.

358. The L.C.T. were in a very precarious state, having been left behind as being unfit to be sent to the Mediterranean; and it was with some hesitation that the naval authorities had agreed to let them undertake such tasks, which often involved running ashore under surf conditions. It is greatly to the credit of the commanders and crews of these craft that the Army's requirements were met, and that the craft themselves developed no major defects; no depot or repair ship was available to maintain them; and their nearest shore bases, at Chittagong and Calcutta, were far out of their reach. For more than three months, also, the crews had to live in their craft under conditions for which the accommodation was never designed.

359. Being supplied by sea, and dispensing entirely with a land line of communication, the brigade of 25 Indian Division that was advancing down the coast was able to concentrate all its energies on a rapid thrust. It reached Foul Point on the 26th December—five days before Lieut.-General Christison had estimated that they would reach Indin (half-way between Maungdaw and Foul Point)—and by that date, the whole of the Kalapanzin Plain north of the Saingdin Chaung had been cleared of the enemy. By the 29th December, Rathedaung and Kudaung Island had been occupied; and this had only been made possible by the tactical mobility which supply by sea afforded.

360. After a visit to Arakan, during which I had found that the whole advance was well ahead of schedule, I held a meeting on the 21st December at my temporary advanced Headquarters at Calcutta with the Commanders-in-Chief to review the new situation which the unexpected speed of our advance had created. Another factor which made it necessary to reconsider our original time-table was that the Akyab garrison had been gradually thinning out, so that the regiment of 54 Japanese Division which was holding it should provide reinforcements for 55 Japanese Division in the Kaladan Valley. Since it was still not possible, however, to fix a date for the assault on Akyab Island, I ordered four alternative plans for this operation to be prepared: ranging from an *ad hoc* operation in January (TALON D) to a full-scale assault early in March (TALON B).

361. On the 27th December, the Commanders-in-Chief informed me that in their opinion TALON D could be carried out some time between the 20th and 27th January; I agreed that planning for TALON D should continue, provided that preparations for this in no way interfered with the eventual possible launching of TALON B—for if the enemy should at the last moment decide to reinforce the Akyab garrison, a full-scale assault would be necessary. On the same day, however, Lieut.-General Christison, who considered that Akyab could not be adequately defended by the one Japanese battalion which was now reported as remaining there, recommended that TALON D should be launched as quickly as possible—in a week's time, on the 3rd January—with an assault on the north shore of Akyab Island from the neighbourhood of Foul Point.

362. 3 Commando Brigade and the landing-craft composing the naval assault force were concentrated in the Naaf River; 224 Group made preparations to give maximum air-support; and a naval bombardment force was assembled in readiness at Chittagong, under the command of Rear-Admiral A. D. Read.[1] On the 2nd January, an air observation post artillery officer, seeing no enemy troops in the vicinity, landed on an air-strip in the centre of the Island; and the local inhabitants informed him that the Japanese had already left. It could not be taken for granted, however, that the whole Island had been evacuated, so the Force Commanders decided that a proper assault landing should be made—but without sea and air bombardment, unless these were specially called for. 3 Commando Brigade made the initial landing as planned, and a brigade of 25 Indian Division followed from Foul Point; the town of Akyab was found to have been badly damaged, both by our bombing and by enemy demolition. But in a sense the battle for

[1] This force consisted of the cruisers NEWCASTLE (Rear-Admiral Commanding 4th Cruiser Squadron), PHOEBE, and NIGERIA, and the destroyers RAPID, PATHFINDER, and RAIDER. In addition, the destroyers NAPIER (with Flag Officer Force "W" on board) and NEPAL and the sloop SHOREHAM were detailed for troop carrying and, if required, bombardment at a later stage.

Akyab had been won in the Kaladan Valley; for it was later learned that two of the three battalions defending Akyab had been thrown into the battle there, and that when these had failed to stem our advance the third battalion, which would not be able to hold Akyab on its own, had been withdrawn 48 hours before we arrived.

363. Patrols were then sent to the Baronga Islands and the Pauktaw Peninsula, which were found to be clear of the enemy. Work on the airfield at Akyab began immediately; and in a few days a squadron of Spitfires, operating from it, was able to deal effectively with an air attack on the harbour which the enemy made on the 9th January. On the 8th, Force 64 had moved to Akyab, from where a direct assault on Myebon by 3 Commando Brigade and a brigade of 25 Indian Division was now to be mounted for the 12th January: which only allowed the naval assault force and the assaulting troops 72 hours in which to plan and mount the operation. The harbour at Akyab was disorganised and badly damaged, and the air raid on the 9th had also added to the difficulties of preparation; it is greatly to the credit of the Force Commanders that they were able to mount this operation at such remarkably short notice.

364. On the 12th, a preliminary naval and air bombardment was carried out by the Indian sloops NARBADA and JUMNA, as well as by 48 Mitchells (B-25) of the U.S. 12th Bombardment Group; while a Combined Operations Pilotage Party (C.O.P.P.) cleared the beach defences. About 25 minutes after the bombardment, 3 Commando Brigade made the assault on Myebon under cover of a smoke-screen. NARBADA and JUMNA gave further bombardment support, while motor-launches supported the flanks; and 224 Group gave close air-support with a force of Thunderbolts (P-47) and Hurricanes, while Lightnings (P-38) and Spitfires maintained fighter cover, and were used in conjunction with Visual Control Posts to attack ground targets.

365. On the next day, the follow-up convoy arrived at Myebon with a brigade of 25 Indian Division; and in the next few days the remainder of the division was lifted from Akyab (the cruiser PHOEBE lifting four battalion groups in four days), and a bridgehead was secured; but the enemy counter-attacked and a week of severe fighting followed, in which our forces pushed northwards up the Myebon Peninsula towards Kantha. They were supported by Thunderbolts (P-47) and Hurricanes of 224 Group, as well as by sloops and destroyers which moved up the Myebon River and bombarded enemy positions ahead of our advancing troops. By the 21st, we had captured Kantha and established a line two miles north of the town which effectively secured the Myebon Peninsula against further enemy counter-attacks.

366. In the meantime, plans were being made to capture Ramree Island, and in particular the port and airfield site of Kyaukpyu, on its north-western tip; besides providing a point where an important base for the air-supply of the Fourteenth Army could be set up, Kyaukpyu had a good anchorage, capable of taking large ships—which meant that it would be possible to transport supplies direct by sea from Indian ports, to the projected airfield. For the direct assault on Ramree, it was decided to use 26 Indian Division (which had originally been assigned to the Akyab assault); while a detachment of Royal Marines from the East Indies Fleet, transported in warships and supported by naval aircraft, was to make a landing on Cheduba Island, 12 miles south of Ramree, a few days later. For the support of these two landings, a naval bombardment force was released from the Myebon operation, together with mine-sweepers and motor-launches.

367. On the 21st January, a brigade of 26 Indian Division successfully assaulted Kyaukpyu, under cover of sea and air bombardment. I had visited the three Force Commanders at Akyab three days before, and had learnt[1] that the enemy was placing guns in caves that covered the beaches. In order that these caves should be blasted, I made a signal through Mercury[2] to Ceylon, for a battleship to strengthen the bombardment force.[3] Four squadrons of Liberators (B-24) had bombed strong-points covering the beaches; and immediately before the landing 24 Thunderbolts (P-47) had bombed and strafed the beaches themselves. By nightfall Kyaukpyu was in our hands, and immediate steps were taken to begin the development of the airfield and anchorage; while our forces continued southward to secure Ramree town and the rest of the Island.

368. The enemy troops remaining on the Island were cut off by the Navy in Operation BLOCK: which consisted of the blocking of the channels through the mangrove swamps by motor-launches; British yacht minesweepers; Landing Craft, Support; and Landing Craft, Assault. This operation lasted from the 8th to the 22nd February; during which time most of the enemy trying to escape were wiped out, and the remainder mopped up by our land forces on the Island.

[1] From a Special Boat Section of the Commandos.
[2] See "B", second footnote to paragraph 97.
[3] The QUEEN ELIZABETH supported the landings with her main armament; and her 15-inch guns (which had not been in action since they bombarded the Dardanelles forts in 1915) blasted the gun positions in the caves.

The landing on Cheduba Island was not made till the 26th January; when a force of about 500 Royal Marines (WELLINGTON Force) landed with naval support.[1]

369. On the mainland, the enemy had been retreating southward down the Kaladan Valley before the advance of 81 West African Division down the west bank of the river; and our main objective in this area would now be to cut off his escape. The key-point on his escape route would be Kangaw; and it was therefore planned to undertake an amphibious assault against Kangaw on or about the 22nd January, with 3 Commando Brigade and the all-Indian brigade of 25 Indian Division—while an overland drive northward from Myebon would be made by the other two brigades of the division, with the object of capturing Minbya. It was also planned that 81 and 82 West African Divisions should make a two-pronged attack on Myohaung (the ancient capital of Arakan): we calculated that the capture of Myohaung would force the Japanese commander to order a general retreat from this area—but we did not wish this to happen until the Kangaw landings had been made. It was therefore decided to aim at capturing Myohaung on the 25th January, when the enemy's escape route from there, and down the Kaladan Valley, had been sealed.

370. It was anticipated that the Kangaw landing would be heavily opposed; and great care was taken to find a suitable point for the assault. In chaung warfare, the selection of landing-points always presents a problem: for points suitable both from a naval and from a military point of view are rare; and where these do exist, they are usually dominated at a close range by jungle-covered hills. The larger, navigable chaungs are intersected by a great many minor ones, and this prevents landings from being made on a broad front. It is necessary to find a gap in the mangrove banks through which a landing can be made into the paddy-fields—and care must be taken to ensure that the ground beyond is firm enough to support not only infantry, but tanks and artillery as well.

371. At Kangaw, there were possible landing-points north-west of the village; but the enemy had built up a strong defensive system which effectively blocked any approach from that direction. It was therefore decided that the landing would be made in the Daingbon Chaung, which lies to the south-west of the village and is approachable from Myebon; and that the assault would be made from there.[2] After extensive examination by Photographic Reconnaissance aircraft and C.O.P.Ps., a point was finally chosen two-and-half miles south-west of Kangaw. The most direct approach to Kangaw from Myebon is northward up the Myebon River; but it was not practicable to use this approach, as there were strong Japanese artillery positions at Zinyamaw, on the west bank of the chaung. It was therefore decided to make a wide detour southward down the Thegyan River, and then northward up the Daingbon Chaung. The channel in these approaches was found to be shallow and very constricted; but a quick survey revealed that it was just deep, and just wide enough to allow of sloops reaching the landing-points—without any room to spare for manoeuvring. (Actually, however, no sloop approached nearer than five miles to the beach-heads during the assault itself.)

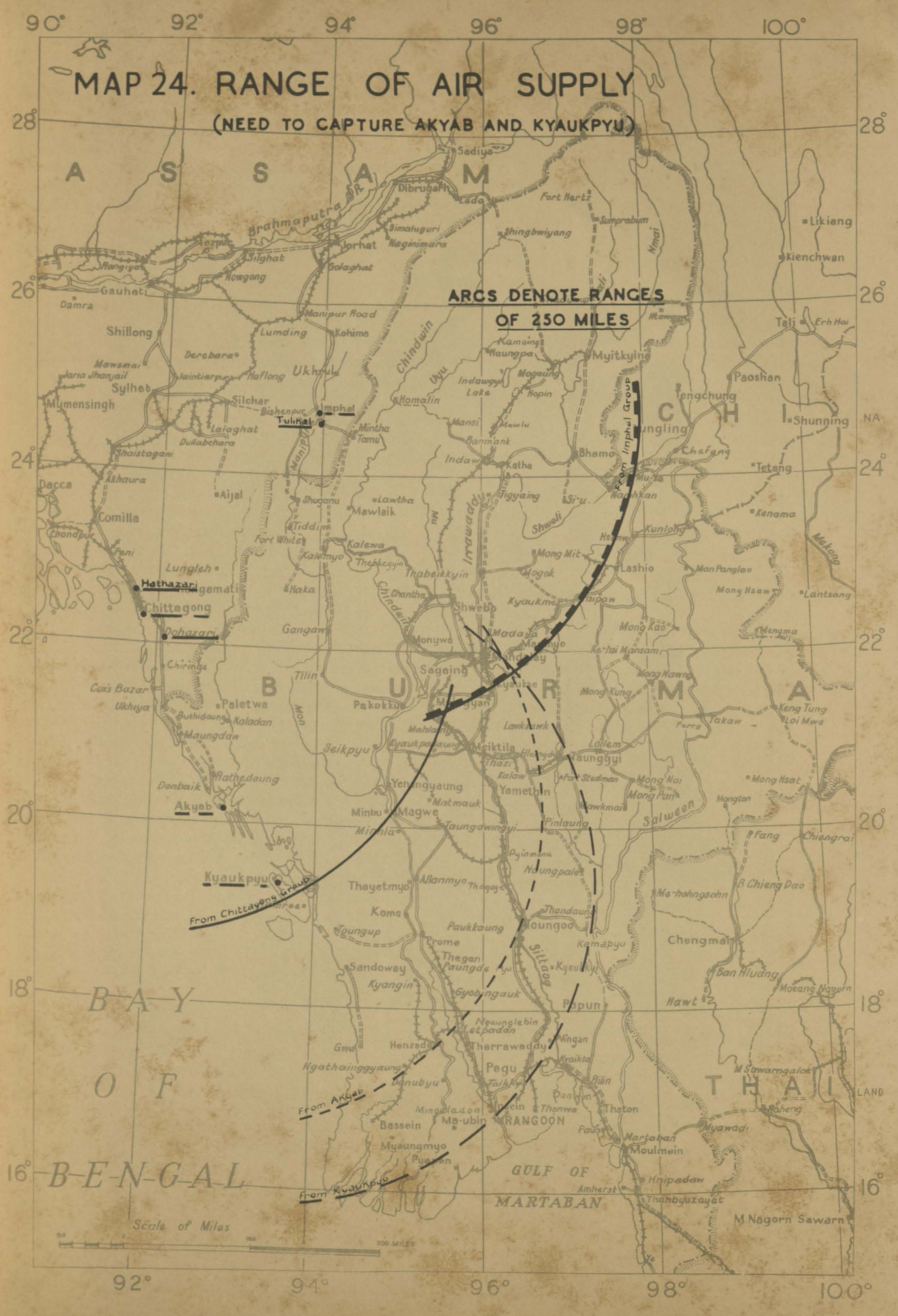
372. Maximum support would be given to the operation by the tactical squadrons of 224 Group, the four Mitchell (B-25) squadrons of the U.S. 12th Bombardment Group, and Liberators (B-24) of the Strategic Air Force; the latter having been taken off strategic bombing and temporarily placed under Air Vice-Marshal Bandon's operational control for tactical bombing. At this time, 224 Group's commitments in Arakan were considerable; for besides giving close support for the forthcoming assault on Kangaw, and to current operations by the West African divisions in the Kaladan Valley, it was also carrying out the routine provision of fighter escorts to bombers and transport aircraft, while maintaining air superiority and attacking enemy coastal craft both within and outside the battle area. Fortunately, the initial landings on Ramree Island had gone so well that almost all available squadrons could now be switched to support the Kangaw operation.

373. On the 22nd January[3], the first landings were made at Kangaw by 3 Commando Brigade. Just before the landing-craft touched down, two squadrons of Mitchells (B-25) bombed a fortified hill which dominated the landing-point; while Hurricanes laid a smoke-screen, and Thunderbolts (P-47) attacked Daingbon village. The enemy was taken completely by surprise. In order to mislead him, the sloop JUMNA and motor-launches had made diversionary attacks in the Myebon River; and the fact that we had not taken the obvious chaung route northward from Myebon had probably also misled the enemy or perhaps his attention had been distracted by the potential threat to Kangaw which our overland operations from Myebon and the Kaladan Valley provided. However that may be, when our troops first landed—led and

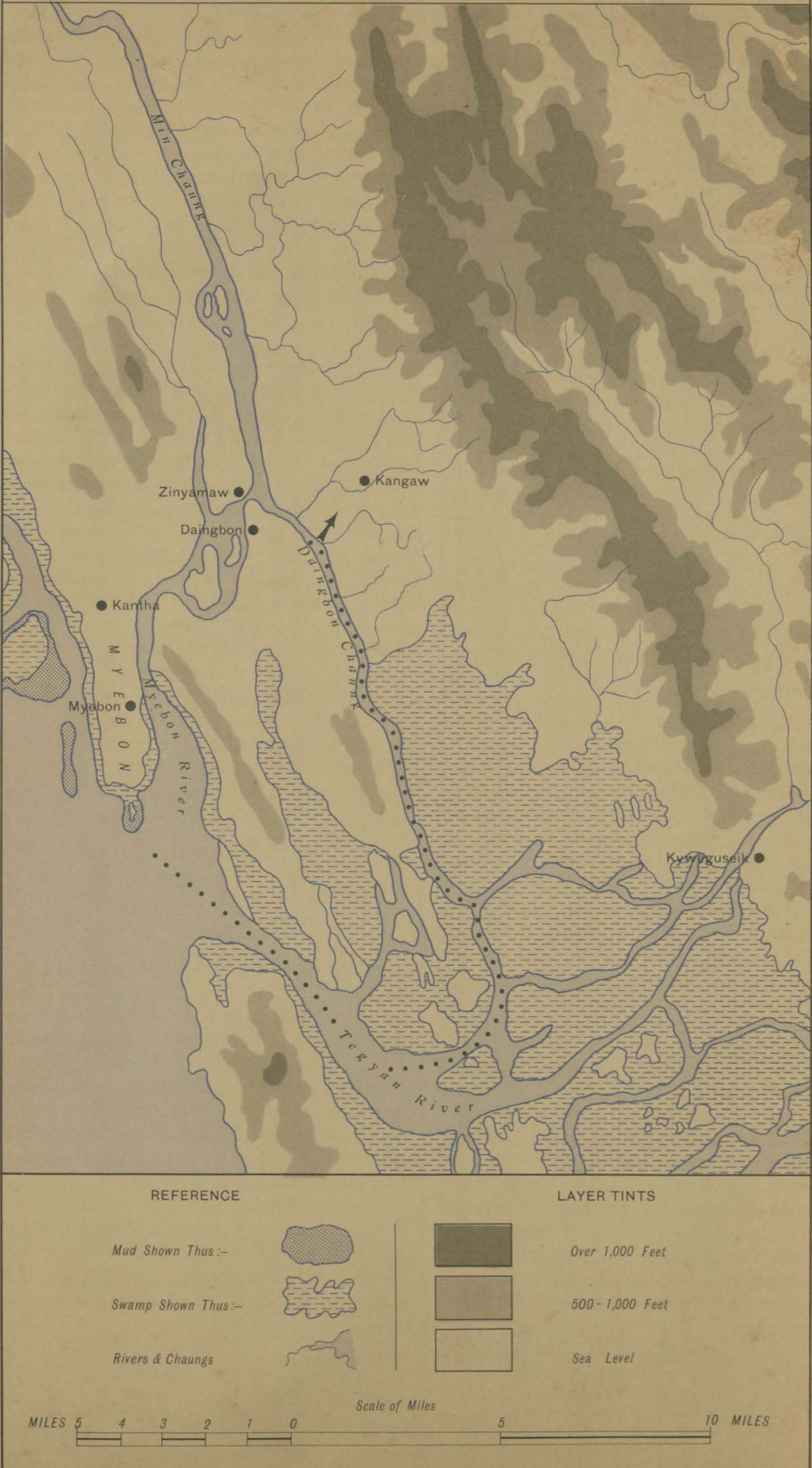
[1] This operation had been entirely a responsibility of the East Indies Fleet, planned and executed by personnel of the fleet.

[2] See Map 25.

[3] One day after the Kyaukpyu assault.


MAP 24. RANGE OF AIR SUPPLY
(NEED TO CAPTURE AKYAB AND KYAUKPYU)
ARCS DENOTE RANGES OF 250 MILES
From Imphal Group
From Chittagong Group
From Akyab
From Kyaukpyu
ASSAM
BURMA
CHINA
THAILAND
BAY OF BENGAL
GULF OF MARTABAN
Imphal
Tulihal
Hathazari
Chittagong
Dohazari
Akyab
Kyaukpyu
Scale of Miles

# MAP 25. THE ASSAULT ON KANGAW



supported by motor-launches, and Landing Craft, Support—the Japanese guns were all pointing north and west, away from the area.

374. When the enemy realised the urgency of keeping his escape route open, he launched a series of strong counter-attacks. Our troops inflicted and suffered heavy casualties, but gave no ground; and on the night of the 23rd they were reinforced by the all-Indian brigade of 25 Indian Division, which landed successfully under strong enemy fire. The enemy enjoyed great tactical advantage, for from the Japanese position it was possible to pour shells into our restricted area: on the 28th alone, the enemy fired nearly 1,000 shells into the bridgehead. That night, he launched another series of desperate counter-attacks; but he gained no ground in the fierce fighting that followed. On the 30th, our troops went over to the attack, captured Kangaw village and established a road block which effectively sealed the enemy's escape route to the south; on the 31st, the enemy staged one of his most savage counter-attacks—but it was his last. Meanwhile, 82 West African Division had occupied Myohaung on the 25th and had advanced southwards through Minbya and down the road towards Kangaw. Caught between the two forces the enemy was compelled to attempt to escape in small parties over the jungle-covered hills to the east and the west.

375. This battle, in which both sides had suffered very heavy casualties, had been comparable in ferocity with the battle of the "Admin. Box" in the previous February, and with the battle of Kohima. By hitting the enemy at a very sensitive point, we had brought him to battle in strength, for at the height of the action in the Myebon–Kangaw area, the Japanese were using the equivalent of a full fighting division, as well as Divisional and Army troops. In the Kangaw battle alone, they lost at least 2,000 men killed, 16 guns, 14 large motor-craft, and a considerable amount of other equipment. Against this, our total casualties, though unusually heavy, were around 600.

376. The Kangaw action was one of the heaviest yet undertaken by the Allied air forces: Liberators (B-24), Mitchells (B-25), Thunderbolts (P-47), Spitfires and Hurricanes had all taken part in these attacks, bombing and strafing the Kangaw road and the hill positions dominating the bridgehead. Between the 26th January and the 2nd February, more than 750 tons of bombs were dropped on the area, killing many Japanese, destroying their guns, and neutralising their strong-points. The operation was an outstanding example of inter-service co-operation; Force 64 and the supporting craft having carried out their tasks successfully under heavy fire, in spite of difficulties of navigation and restrictions on manoeuvre—as well as having subsequently to undertake a number of special tasks for which they had not been intended. For the Army arrangements for bringing inland water-transport to maintain the ground forces did not go according to plan. Until this arrived (on the 11th February), the treatment of casualties and the entire supply of the ground forces was undertaken by the Navy. Minesweepers acted as hospital carriers, a field surgical unit was embarked in the sloop NARBADA; and landing-craft were used as casualty clearing stations, water-carriers, and general supply vessels.

377. On the 30th January, the Force Commanders held a meeting at Myebon to discuss future operations. Lieut.-General Christison was in favour of carrying out another amphibious operation, in the Tamandu area, as soon as possible; but the naval commanders were unwilling to do this until the Kangaw area had been finally cleared and the Army had taken over their own maintenance commitments in the area. They argued that a firm base for future operations would have to be established in the forward area, and a great deal of maintenance carried out on the small craft (which had been continuously in action for several weeks) before another combined operation could be undertaken. It was consequently decided not to undertake another operation immediately; but to send out survey units and C.O.P.Ps. with orders to reconnoitre down the coast to the south and to carry out small Commando raids in various areas, until a further full-scale operation could be launched.

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On the 9th January, Lieut.-General Leese informed me that he and Major-General Stratemeyer had calculated that at least 100 additional transport aircraft—in fact, the equivalent of the fourth Combat Cargo Group on which we had originally been counting—would be required by the 1st February, for the supply of the Fourteenth Army. At a meeting with my Commanders-in-Chief, Air Marshal Garrod fully substantiated this figure; and after discussions with the Civil Affairs staff, a further 40 transport aircraft were added, for the supply of the civil population in liberated areas: which made a total of 140 required from outside the theatre. Even if we were to obtain 100 additional aircraft, our total strength in transport aircraft would be no more than had originally been

allocated for CAPITAL; and the land/air plan had been based on the supposition that the strength we started CAPITAL with would be continuously available. Since mid-December, therefore, when three Combat Cargo squadrons had been transferred to China without notice, a considerable backlog had accumulated; and our logistic resources were now stretched almost to breaking-point.

379. A hold-up in our advance at this stage, before we had reached and crossed the Irrawaddy, would wreck the campaign; yet with our present resources it was doubtful whether Lieut.-General Slim would even be able to bring up all the divisions he needed for a decisive action against the enemy—let alone maintaining such a force during the fighting. The position was very serious. On the 11th January, I telegraphed an appreciation to the Chiefs of Staff: saying that I was sending home my Chief of Staff, Lieut.-General F. A. M. (later Sir Frederick) Browning[1] to present our case. He had recently succeeded Lieut.-General Pownall, who had been invalided some time before, but had remained on until he could be replaced.

380. I accompanied Lieut.-General Browning as far as Delhi for final discussions with India Command. On the eve of his departure for London, I received a telegram from the Chiefs of Staff, saying that it was not necessary to send him home; but as 140 extra aircraft would mean the difference between a great success and a possible disaster, I decided not to stop him, and telegraphed to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff saying that I was sending him nevertheless. The mission was successful. Lieut.-General Browning convinced the Chiefs of Staff that success or failure in Burma depended on these aircraft; and they now determined that we should have sufficient transport aircraft for our coming operations.

381. Representations in Washington resulted in Lieut.-General Wedemeyer being asked to return two of the three Combat Cargo squadrons by the 1st February. In addition to this, the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean,[2] was asked to send one British squadron of 25 Dakotas (C-47) from the Mediterranean; the First Sea Lord[3] agreed to divert on loan a squadron of 30 Dakotas which were due to go to Australia in support of the recently-formed British Pacific Fleet; finally, it was decided to strengthen the eight R.A.F. Transport squadrons in South-East Asia from 25 to 30 aircraft. As a result, we were reinforced by 145 aircraft—five more than we had actually asked for—and we could proceed towards the approaching decisive battles around Meiktila and Mandalay with confidence. The capture of Rangoon was now a feasible proposition; though the method of its capture could not at this stage be planned in detail, for it would depend on how soon, and how completely, we could achieve victory in Central Burma.

382. On the 33 Corps front, at the beginning of January, 19 Indian Division and 2 British Division were racing towards Shwebo, the race being won by 19 Indian Division: which, after smashing a strong enemy rearguard, entered the eastern outskirts of the town on the 7th. 2 British Division (having captured the Kabo Weir on New Year's Eve, and Ye-U on the 3rd January) arrived at Shwebo on the 8th: fighting its way into the town from the north-west, while 19 Indian Division was still fighting its way in. The town was finally cleared on the 10th, and immediate steps were taken to prepare its five airfields in time to support the crossings of the Irrawaddy and the subsequent advance to the south. The enemy had undertaken extensive denial measures, which it took some time to repair; while the nature of the soil, and a shortage of water, made it difficult to lay the dust and keep the surface in good condition.

383. After the capture of Ye-U and Shwebo, Lieut.-General Stopford had to slow down the general advance of 33 Corps, in order to consolidate its positions north and west of the Irrawaddy. The Corps was now 400 miles from its railhead, and its land line of communication was greatly strained; moreover, its air-supply had been reduced (which was the immediate occasion of my sending my Chief of Staff to London), and had in fact been limited to the maintenance of only three brigades, the remainder being supplied overland. Current operations were therefore limited, for the time being, to maintaining contact with the enemy, locating his main defences, pushing forward towards the Irrawaddy, preparing for the crossings, training and generally re-grouping for the major offensive. But it was essential that the initiative should be retained. In order to relieve the divisions of responsibility for their rear areas, Lieut.-General Stopford formed a Corps reserve force, consisting of 268 Indian Infantry Brigade and a detachment of 254 Indian Tank Brigade. The Commander of this force assumed operational command of all troops in the Shwebo area, and became responsible for defending its airfields and other installations against Japanese raiding parties. As a result, the operational formations remained free

[1] Who had reported to me on his arrival in the theatre, at a ceremony held on the battlefield of Imphal on the 15th December, at which the Viceroy had knighted the Army Commander and the three Corps Commanders.

[2] Field-Marshal Alexander, who had relieved Field-Marshal Wilson in December, 1944.

[3] Admiral of the Fleet Sir Andrew Cunningham (later The Viscount Cunningham of Hyndhope).

of static commitments, and this allowed them to continue their advance.

384. Two brigades of 19 Indian Division fought their way eastward from Shwebo towards the Irrawaddy; and after reconnaissance crossings had been made, they crossed the river on the 14th January and secured a foothold at Thabeikkyin. On the following day, they secured a second foothold opposite Kyaukmyaung. The enemy laid down harassing artillery fire; but he had evidently been taken by surprise, and it was not until the division was well established on the east bank that he launched a series of fierce counter-attacks. The enemy had been led to suppose that the crossings had been made with support from two other divisions, which were not in fact present. The Japanese commander rose to the bait, moving all his reserve forces to the area north of Mandalay; while the greatest artillery concentration which he could produce fell daily on the bridgeheads. But 19 Indian Division held firm and gradually strengthened their positions.

385. By this time, 20 Indian Division, conducting a series of skilful operations through difficult country just to the east of the line of the Chindwin, had captured Budalin on the 10th January after three weeks of bitter fighting, and was now advancing on Monywa. The enemy had built up strong defences north and east of the town; for Monywa was his only remaining port and administrative centre on the Chindwin. Although the approaches to these strongly-defended positions were over open ground, the division fought a sharp three-day battle, then stormed the town and occupied it on the 22nd January.

386. The brigade of 20 Indian Division which had captured Monywa was strongly supported by 221 Group, which had flown over 200 fighter and bomber sorties during the three-day battle; and the speed with which the enemy's strong defences were reduced had been chiefly due to continuous attack by Thunderbolts (P-47), Mosquitos and Hurricanes, with bombs, cannons, and rockets. This was the first time rockets had been used on the 33 Corps front, and they had very effectively destroyed and demoralised the enemy. On the day that Monywa fell, other units of 20 Indian Division captured Myinmu on the Irrawaddy: they surprised a large body of Japanese in the act of trying to cross the river and escape, and annihilated most of these in hand-to-hand fighting. (When the fighting was nearly over, a detachment of Japanese put on ceremonial equipment, and formally committed suicide by marching into the river.) During the next three weeks, 20 Indian Division cleared the area between the Chindwin and Mu Rivers, and established themselves along the north bank of the Irrawaddy bend on a broad front; while 2 British Division, which had been fighting its way down the line of the Shwebo–Sagaing road and railway, had also reached the Irrawaddy at Myinmu and Sagaing by the end of the month.

387. 4 Corps, which had been advancing towards the Irrawaddy by way of the Gangaw Valley, had also made good progress by the end of January. Lieut.-General Messervy had divided his plan of campaign into four steps[1]:—

(*a*) the capture of Pakokku, and an advance on Seikpyu and Yenangyaung;

(*b*) the establishment of a Corps bridgehead over the Irrawaddy in the Pakokku–Pagan area; the target date being mid-February;

(*c*) the concentration of the Corps on the east bank of the Irrawaddy; and

(*d*) a lightning overland thrust to seize the Meiktila–Thazi area (assisted by an airborne operation). The target date for this was as soon as possible after mid-February; and the liquidation of the Japanese Army south and south-west of Mandalay was to be the next step.

388. Appreciating the fact that speed as well as surprise was vital to the success of his plan, Lieut.-General Messervy reckoned that our diversionary measures would produce a diminishing return. However effective they might be in misleading the enemy, they could not do so for long; and most of their point would disappear unless the advance to Meiktila was made quickly and in strength. Accordingly, in the middle of January he recommended that 17 Indian Division should now be put on an entirely mechanised and air-transportable basis.[2] General Slim agreed, and at once took the necessary steps. The division, which had returned from Ranchi and was now at Dimapur, was brought south to the Imphal Plain; two of the brigades were fully mechanised, while the third was concentrated at Palel, where it prepared itself to fly in to the Meiktila area as soon as one of the airfields had been secured. The Army, Corps, and Divisional staffs used every expedient to re-organise these brigades: re-shuffling transport within the division itself, and stripping 11 East African Division and 5 Indian Division (which was in Army reserve) of most of their vehicles. When fully mechanised, the two brigades were rushed into forward concentration, which placed

[1] See Map 26 overleaf.

[2] 17 Indian Division had been reorganised on a standard three-brigade basis.

a great strain on our administrative resources; but the success of the forthcoming operation was of paramount importance, and other considerations had to take second place.

389. In the Gangaw Valley, 28 East African Brigade (which had been posing successfully as the leading brigade of 11 East African Division) and the Lushai Brigade had been engaged in heavy fighting since the end of the year. A heavy air strike had been made on the strongly-entrenched Japanese defended positions around Gangaw itself, but it had failed to dislodge the enemy. On the 10th January, a twice-postponed "earthquake attack" was carried out in the area by four squadrons of Mitchells (B-25), three squadrons of Hurribombers, and one squadron of Thunderbolts (P-47). The object of these "earthquakes" was the clearance of some particular defended area immediately before a ground attack; the principle was, to begin with a relatively heavy bombing attack, after which fighter-bombers bombed and strafed the target by sections, advancing as the ground forces advanced and finishing with dummy attacks. At Gangaw the bombing was right on the target, and completely successful: the ground forces went in immediately and all the defended positions were secured.

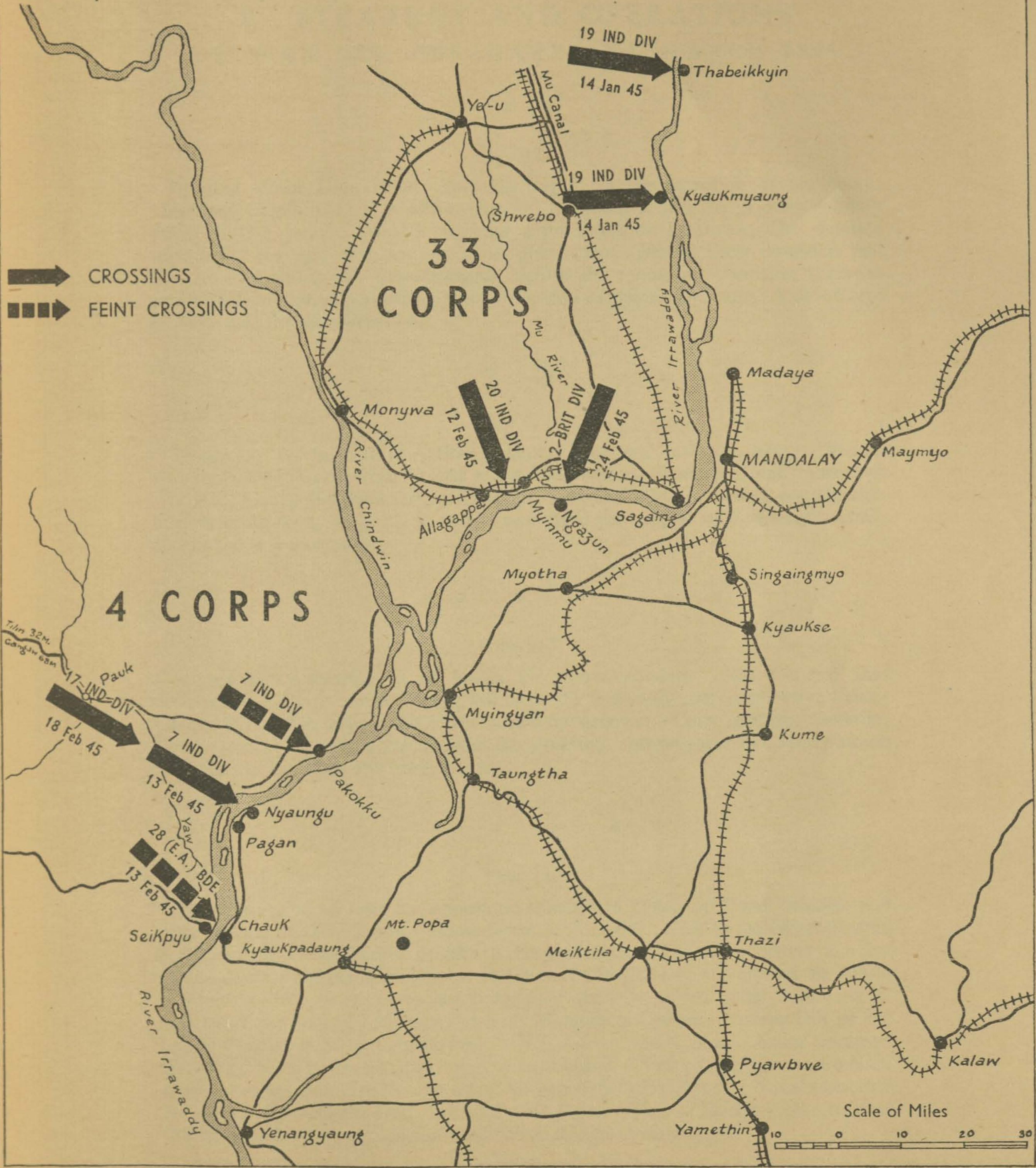
390. After two days of strenuous fighting, supported by the bombers of Strategic Air Force, 28 East African Brigade and the Lushai Brigade had cleared the town; Japanese resistance in the Gangaw Valley was now broken, and the way was open to 4 Corps for a rapid advance to the Irrawaddy. The Lushai Brigade, which had been operating over very bad country for more than a year on end, and was considerably exhausted and reduced in numbers, was now withdrawn to India. At this point, also, 7 Indian Division (which had recently arrived from Imphal) took over the lead from 28 East African Brigade, and assumed operational control of all fighting in the Gangaw area. Its immediate tasks would be to cut off as many Japanese as possible, and pursue the enemy to the Irrawaddy with mobile columns which could then harass his crossings.

391. 7 Indian Division would also have to secure the Pauk area by the end of January, so that an air-strip capable of taking Commandos (C-46) could be constructed. After which, a suitable crossing-place for 4 Corps had to be chosen secretly (so as not to divert the enemy's attention from the crossings made north of Mandalay) and a bridgehead seized. On the 22nd January,[1] Tilin was captured, and immediate steps were taken to construct a forward airfield; and on the 27th, the division, after a most difficult journey along the Tiddim–Pauk track (which winds over the Pondaung Range, and is at some points so deep in dust as to hold up even jeeps), turned the enemy out of his strong positions covering Pauk. Lieut.-General Messervy agreed the choice of Nyaungu as the site of the Irrawaddy crossing and the establishment of a bridgehead: topographically, this was an unlikely crossing and was consequently lightly defended by units of the Indian National Army, stiffened by only one company of Japanese troops. Feint crossings, synchronised with the real crossing, were to be made at Chauk and Pakokku; and to implement this plan 28 East African Brigade was directed south from the Pauk–Pakokku road with a small force of armoured cars, and was ordered to capture Seikpyu (which, after heavy fighting, it did on the 10th February).

392. By the end of January, the two mechanised brigades of 17 Indian Division were concentrated with 255 Indian Tank Brigade in the Gangaw Valley, ready to advance as soon as 7 Indian Division had established its bridgehead across the Irrawaddy. With 4 Corps engaged in clearing the Pakokku–Seikpyu area, and 33 Corps well established in the Thabeikkyin–Kyaukmyaung bridgeheads and holding a long stretch of the river front at Myinmu, we now had bridgeheads on the central reaches of the Irrawaddy on a total frontage of 160 miles.

[1] On the same day, H.Q. 4 Corps opened at Kan (Map 7–G. 3).

Map 26. THE SOUTHERN CROSSINGS OF THE IRRAWADDY



# SYNOPSIS

## B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

### SECTION SIX: FEBRUARY AND MARCH 1945

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Opening of the Ledo Road; Planning begun for the recapture of Singapore; Combined Chiefs of Staff re-affirm that aid to China is still the primary military object of U.S. policy; Decision to stage a pre-monsoon DRACULA; This decision reviewed in the light of a new Army/Air plan; Lieut.-General Leese considers that the overland thrust can take Rangoon before the monsoon. Decision taken to capture Phuket Island (Operation ROGER), instead of staging DRACULA; A new Corps to be formed for this operation.

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Programme for build-up of Arakan as supply base for Fourteenth Army; Gradual withdrawal of 15 Corps from Arakan to ease strain on maintenance; Joint Fourteenth Army/221 Group Headquarters at Kalemyo; Responsibility for airfield construction in Fourteenth Army area; 221 Group is reinforced for support of Fourteenth Army, and its scope is increased.

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*Page* 127

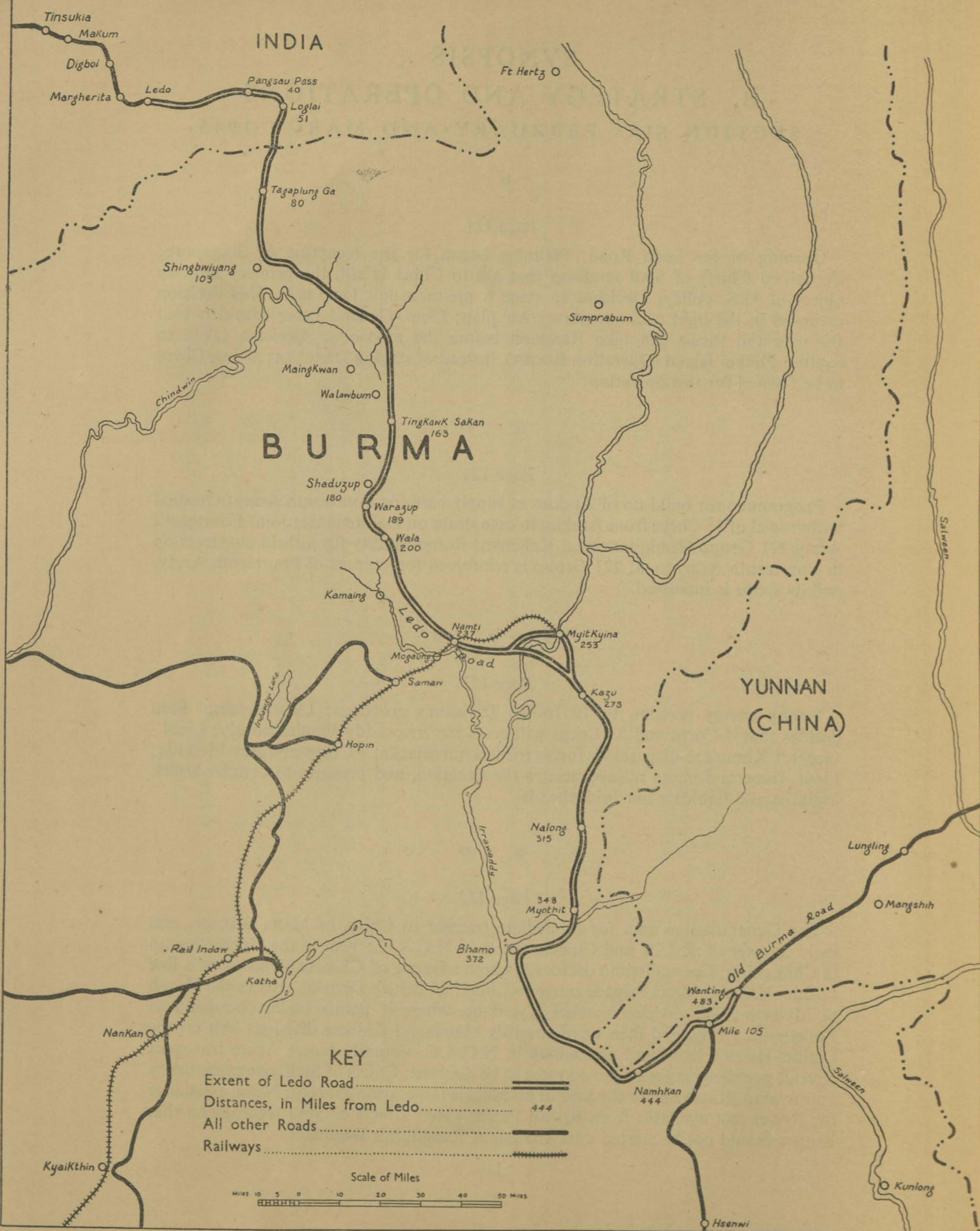
Strong enemy reaction to 19 Indian Division's crossings; Lieut.-General Slim decides that 4 Corps and 33 Corps will cross the Irrawaddy simultaneously; Lieut.-General Kimura re-disposes his forces to meet our attacks; 4 Corps captures Meiktila; Lieut.-General Kimura misappreciates the situation, and prepares to counter-attack Meiktila and liquidate our bridgeheads.

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The Generalissimo asks for immediate transfer to China of MARS Brigade, and early transfer of all U.S. and Chinese forces in N.C.A.C.; Visit to the Generalissimo in Chungking; Generalissimo decides to check advance of Chinese divisions on a line Lashio–Hsipaw; MARS Brigade move to China; 36 British Division crosses the Shweli at Myitson ; The division reaches Kyaukme, where it comes under command of Fourteenth Army, and then turns towards Mandalay; Chinese divisions halt on the Lashio–Hsipaw line—and operations in N.C.A.C. virtually cease; Acute transport aircraft problem causes sustained rates to be doubled; Chiefs of Staff give preliminary approval to ROGER and to the assault on Malaya (Operation ZIPPER); Naval assistance for ROGER not available from British Pacific Fleet; Chiefs of Staff recommend that ROGER should not be started until the fall of Rangoon is imminent.

# Map 27. THE LEDO ROAD



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On the 27th January, the Ledo Road was opened.[1] 38 Chinese Division of N.C.A.C. established contact with 11 Chinese Army Group[2] of the Yunnan Force on the old Burma Road at Mong Yu, on the Burma side of the frontier about 20 miles south of Wanting. On the following day, the first American Chinese convoy from India, led by Brigadier-General Pick, crossed the frontier with appropriate rejoicings; and the Generalissimo christened the road the "Stilwell Road", as a compliment to the man who had had the courage and the skill to push through the project and who until three months previously had commanded the forces that had carried it out. 38 Chinese Division had followed 30 Chinese Division in the advance on Namhkan from Bhamo; and after the capture of Namhkan on the 15th January, two regiments of 38 Chinese Division had turned north-eastward up the valley of the Shweli River—while 11 Chinese Army Group, which had captured Wanting on the 20th, advanced south-westward to meet them, reconstructing the road under American supervision as they went along.

394. By the beginning of the year, the MARS Brigade (which had taken over from 22 Chinese Division when it was recalled to China) had secured the Si-U area; marched eastward over the mountains into the Hosi–Namhpakka area; and was now heading for the Wanting–Lashio sector of the old Burma Road. On the western flank of N.C.A.C., 36 British Division (which, on crossing the Irrawaddy at Katha, had been relieved by the Fourteenth Army of responsibility for operations along the railway running west of the river) had been operating to the north of the 33 Corps bridgeheads at Thabeikkyin–Kyaukmyaung. Two of its brigades, striking south-eastward towards the Shweli Valley, had reached the north bank of the river, opposite Myitson, at the end of January; while its remaining brigade advanced down the west bank of the Irrawaddy. This brigade, after crossing to the east bank at Tigyaing, had advanced to Twinnge (14 miles north of Thabeikkyin), which it had cleared at Christmas time; since when it had been driving the Japanese southward from the Mong Mit area on to the 33 Corps bridgeheads at Thabeikkyin–Kyaukmyaung. With the opening of the road to China, the clearance of Arakan nearly completed, and our troops well established along the Irrawaddy, I decided that the moment had come to begin serious planning for the recapture of Singapore; and I now instructed the Joint Planning Staff accordingly.

395. On the 3rd February I received the following directive from the Combined Chiefs of Staff:—

"(*a*) Your first object is to liberate Burma at the earliest date.

"(*b*) Subject to the accomplishment of this mission, your next main task will be the liberation of Malaya and the opening of the Straits of Malacca.

"(*c*) In view of your recent success in Burma and of the uncertainty of the date of the final defeat of Germany you must aim at the accomplishment of your first object with the forces at present at your disposal. This does not preclude the despatch of further reinforcements from the European theatre, should circumstances make this possible."

396. This directive, which was based on our own proposals, was accompanied by a statement of the policy which the Combined Chiefs of Staff had agreed to adopt towards the employment of U.S. resources in South-East Asia Command. This read as follows:—

"(*a*) The primary military object of the United States in the China and India–Burma theatres is the continuance of aid to China on a scale that will permit the full co-utilisation of the area and resources of China for operations against the Japanese. United States resources are deployed in India–Burma to provide direct or indirect support for China. Present forces and resources participate not only in operating the bases and lines of communications for United States and Chinese forces in China, but also constitute a reserve immediately available to China without permanently increasing the requirements of transport supplies to China.

"(*b*) The United States Joint Chiefs of Staff contemplate no change in their agreement to S.A.C.S.E.A.'s use of resources of the United States India–Burma theatre in Burma when

[1] See Map 27.

[2] Commanded by General Sung Hsi-lien. Since May, these troops had pushed westward from Yunnan across the 11,000-foot Kaolikong Range; had taken Tengchung in September, after a siege of 51 days; and had captured and held Lungling at the beginning of November. Lungling had been the scene of much fighting, having changed hands at least four times since the Japanese invaded the area.

this use does not prevent the fulfilment of their primary object of rendering support to China including protection of the lines of communication. Any transfer of forces engaged in approved operations in progress in Burma which is contemplated by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff and which in the opinion of the British Chiefs of Staff would jeopardise these operations, will be subject to discussion by the Combined Chiefs of Staff".

397. The decision that aid to China was still the primary military object of U.S. policy, and that my use of American resources was conditional on this, placed us in a very difficult position. In our plans, we could either regard the great American air resources, and the not inconsiderable Chinese ground forces, as being held in reserve for the Generalissimo, and leave them out of account in case we should lose them; or else we could plan on the assumption that the British Chiefs of Staff would succeed in persuading the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff not to remove my American resources in the middle of operations of which they were an essential factor—in either case, firm and satisfactory planning was impossible. Greatly though I was tempted to protest, however, I did not do so.[1]

398. On the 6th February, I issued a further directive to the Commanders-in-Chief. Although the Chiefs of Staff had ordered Operation DRACULA to be postponed until the end of 1945, I had always considered that it might become necessary to mount an amphibious operation in support of the Fourteenth Army, so as to capture Rangoon before the monsoon set in. The timing, as well as the scope, of this operation (which would have to be partly airborne) would naturally depend on the rate of progress of our operations in Central Burma. When our transport aircraft had been diverted to China the prospects of the whole campaign had seemed uncertain. But the situation was now considerably improved: the Fourteenth Army and 15 Corps had made great progress during the winter months; and although our hold on American aircraft was uncertain, we had been assured of large reinforcements of transport aircraft. The capture of Rangoon by the 1st June, at the latest, had become a feasible proposition; and a pre-monsoon DRACULA (with modifications to suit the changed circumstances) could be planned, in case the necessity for it should arise.

399. When Rangoon was captured, Singapore would be our next main objective; and I again impressed on the Commanders-in-Chief that our approach to further strategy in the Command should be entirely subordinated to plans for its capture at the earliest possible moment.[2] During February, various means of approach were examined. It was no longer intended to clear the coast of Tenasserim, and tentative plans against Mergui and Tavoy had been abandoned. The idea of attacking via the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was discarded: firstly, because it would involve a costly assault, and although they would provide useful anchorages, the Islands were not well placed for supporting operations in Malaya or further afield; secondly, because the Japanese no longer disposed of sufficient air forces for the air bases in these Islands to present a great menace.

400. Vice-Admiral C. M. Cooke, Deputy Chief of U.S. Naval Operations, informed me, when we met at Myitkyina on the 16th February, that the Americans favoured an approach via the Sunda Strait and Bangka Island; but Admiral Power considered this out of the question, since the East Indies Fleet could not operate at so great a distance from its base in Ceylon, all the fleet train[3] having gone to the Pacific. The most satisfactory and economical means of approach appeared to be to by-pass the Andamans and Nicobars; and seize a bridgehead about half-way down the Kra Isthmus: as a forward air, naval, and general supply base for our assault on Singapore and Malaya, and for subsequent operations against Siam and Sumatra. I considered Phuket Island the most suitable point on the Isthmus for such a bridgehead; and I directed that its seizure with the minimum force possible (Operation ROGER) should be achieved by June—as soon as possible after the capture of Rangoon and the rehabilitation of its port.

401. In the meantime, we had to concentrate on clearing Burma, and particularly on capturing Rangoon before the monsoon set in. I had not yet decided whether to concentrate all available land and air resources on the Fourteenth Army's advance from the north, hoping that they would reach Rangoon in time; or whether to launch a modified airborne and amphibious operation against Rangoon in conjunction with (and partly at the expense of) the overland advance. The second course might involve the risk of

[1] When I reported to President Roosevelt at Quebec, on my appointment as S.A.C., he said to me: "You are as much my servant now, as Eisenhower is the servant of the King. Your job might have been given to an American. I rely on you to support our policy in South-East Asia as loyally as Eisenhower supports yours in Europe". I decided to be a good American.

[2] Subject to the direction of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in support of the "aid to China" policy.

[3] A fleet train consists of such shipping (e.g., tankers, repair ships, store issuing ships, etc.) as is necessary to maintain an operational naval force far from its shore base.

slowing up the Fourteenth Army, since it would entail the diversion of transport aircraft at an early stage, for training parachute troops. Moreover, since only one amphibious force was available, a modified DRACULA would require the diversion of most of this from Operation ROGER—which would mean postponing ROGER; and this would affect our final assault on Singapore.

402. In spite of these considerations, I instructed the Joint Planning Staff to prepare plans for an amphibious attack on Rangoon (a modified DRACULA) which would, if necessary, be put into effect at reasonably short notice at the expense of ROGER. It was not possible at this stage to decide on a likely date, since this must depend on the progress of Lieut.-General Slim's forces, which were not yet across the formidable barrier of the Irrawaddy; but Admiral Power considered, in any case, that after the 5th May monsoon conditions would make the Rangoon operation impracticable. The Planners came to the conclusion that, if a D-Day of the 5th May was to be met, a firm decision must be taken by the 23rd February; and that, if the operation was to be undertaken, detailed planning by the Force Commanders must start not later than the 24th.

403. On the 14th February I held a meeting with the Commanders-in-Chief, at which the proposed plan for a modified DRACULA, together with current operations in Burma and future operations outside Burma, were discussed. At this meeting Major-General Playfair, who was representing Commander-in-Chief A.L.F.S.E.A., gave the gist of the plan which Fourteenth Army and 221 Group had prepared for the exploitation of their southward drive from the Central Plain after the capture of Mandalay. As this had only just been received, the Joint Planning Staff had been unaware of its existence while they were working on the modified DRACULA. Major-General Playfair stated that Fourteenth Army and 221 Group considered that a highly mobile, air-supported and air-supplied column might reach Rangoon overland as early as the 10th–15th April—about a month before the monsoon was due—provided that our entire effort were applied to implementing the Army/Air plan; but that such an advance would be out of the question if air transport and other resources were diverted to the mounting of an air and seaborne assault on Rangoon.

404. Admiral Power and Air Marshal Garrod supported the opinion of the Planners that although the decision, whether DRACULA or ROGER was to be undertaken, need not be made till the 23rd February, after this date it would be too late to change it. The Joint Planning Staff was accordingly directed to work out another plan, by which:—

(*a*) either we would leave all resources required by Fourteenth Army and 221 Group, so as to ensure their reaching Rangoon overland before the monsoon, and we would prepare to carry out an amphibious operation on the Kra Isthmus (such as ROGER) with separate forces; or

(*b*) we would mount an air and seaborne attack against Rangoon, at the expense of air resources for the overland thrust and of amphibious resources for the Kra Isthmus.

In other words, they were to plan to carry out either DRACULA or ROGER, whichever might be ordered on the 23rd February.

405. On the 23rd February, the decisive meeting was held at my temporary Advanced Headquarters in Calcutta, and was attended by Lieut.-General Wheeler, all three Commanders-in-Chief, Lieut.-General Sultan, and Major-General Stratemeyer. Lieut.-General Leese reported great satisfaction with the Fourteenth Army's progress, and still keenly supported the policy of Operation ROGER. While sharing my repeatedly expressed wish to press on with the assault on Malaya, he considered that this would best be achieved by relying on the overland thrust—which would avoid the inevitable delay to the target date for the capture of Singapore, which the diversion of the amphibious force from ROGER to DRACULA would cause. He expected that Mandalay would fall within three weeks: after which, he proposed to drive into the centre of the Japanese armies and strike towards Loilem (which he considered the key position in Eastern Burma), while simultaneously pushing southward with one Corps towards Rangoon and containing as large an enemy force as possible in Central Burma.

406. Lieut.-General Leese asked that the development of the air transport bases in Arakan, destined to support the Fourteenth Army, should continue at full speed; and Air Marshal Garrod, supported by Major-General Stratemeyer, confirmed that the air arrangements for supporting the overland thrust could be made. Whereupon, Lieut.-General Leese gave it as his opinion that the overland thrust could take Rangoon before the monsoon set in without the aid of DRACULA; and he said that he did not wish any resources to be diverted from the Fourteenth Army. Accepting the estimate that the Army/Air plan (if successfully implemented) would meet requirements for current and future overland operations, I decided,

with the full agreement of the Commanders-in-Chief, in favour of Operation ROGER. Lieut.-General Leese and my new Air Commander-in-Chief, Air Marshal (later Air Chief Marshal) Sir Keith Park,[1] were ordered to put the Army/Air plan into effect; and I reaffirmed that the object of current operations in Burma was to capture Rangoon before the monsoon set in.

407. So far as future operations outside Burma were concerned, highest priority must be given to Operation ROGER; and since it would henceforward be too late for Admiral Power to accept an order for DRACULA, the strategy to which ROGER now committed us must be adhered to—whether we captured Rangoon before the monsoon or not. I expressed the strong hope that D-Day for ROGER would be not later than the 1st June. Since the target was an island, the Joint Planning Staff had estimated for an assault force of one division; but Lieut.-General Leese pointed out that as only a narrow strait separated it from the mainland, the enemy would be able to bring up artillery and shell the northern part of the island, unless a bridgehead on the mainland were simultaneously secured. He estimated that the seizure of a bridgehead on the mainland, in addition to capturing the island itself, would require two divisions and a commando brigade.

408. Admiral Power pointed out that the larger the military force that it would be necessary to put ashore, the greater would be the delay to D-Day—since our amphibious resources were only arriving from England in driblets. He also pointed out that the maintenance of the larger force during the south-west monsoon would be a very heavy naval commitment. But Lieut.-General Leese insisted that he had personally worked out the estimate after careful consideration of the factors involved, and that he could not consider a reduction of the force.[2] I accepted Lieut.-General Leese's recommendation, and agreed to the formation of a new Corps for the operation.[3]

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In Arakan, an urgent but lengthy programme of construction and stock-building was now being undertaken, so as to set up supply bases not only for the maintenance of current local operations, but for the eventual air-supply of the Fourteenth Army in its operations in Central Burma and its overland advance on Rangoon. This programme had to be put into effect almost from scratch, and with very limited resources; and the construction of the necessary airfields provided its own problem, for the engineers estimated that all-weather airfields at Akyab and Kyaukpyu could be completed by the 30th April and the 15th May respectively—but this was far too late for our immediate purpose. It was therefore decided to construct a number of fair-weather strips—from which the Fourteenth Army could be supplied during the second half of March and throughout April, and which would be superseded in the monsoon, when the all-weather strips were completed.

410. Although in theory formations and units of 15 Corps should be gradually withdrawn the moment they were no longer required for essential operations, so as to make no demands on the maintenance resources vital to the development of the airfields, in practice it would be necessary to continue operations in Arakan on a moderate scale until the enemy had been cleared out of the entire coastal strip—since this would tie down 54 and 55 Japanese Divisions and prevent them from reinforcing the remainder of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army, which would be facing the Fourteenth Army in the Irrawaddy Valley. I had spoken to Lieut.-General Leese of the possibility of opening up the Taungup–Prome road, down which it would be possible to carry supplies to the Fourteenth Army when it reached the valley of the lower Irrawaddy; and on the 25th January Lieut.-General Leese had ordered Lieut.-General Christison:

(*a*) to clear the Japanese out of Northern and Central Arakan;

(*b*) to establish a bridgehead at Taungup;

(*c*) to open the Taungup–Prome road, if possible, before the monsoon; and

(*d*) to develop the air bases at Akyab and Kyaukpyu.

The highest priority was to be given to task (*d*); which was not to be interfered with by (*a*), (*b*) or (*c*).

411. By early February, the remnants of 54 Japanese Division had been split into two main groups: a force in the Dalet Chaung area, covering the An–Minbu road; while the remainder of the division was grouped around Taungup. 55 Japanese Division had concentrated its divisional infantry group in the Irrawaddy Valley between Prome and Letpadan, the remainder of the division being spread

[1] Who was present at the meeting, and who relieved Air Marshal Garrod on the 24th February.

[2] On making the detailed plan, the military Force Commander was in full agreement with Lieut.-General Leese's estimate.

[3] 34 Corps Headquarters was raised in India soon after this: the Corps consisting of 23 Indian Division, 81 West African Division, and 3 Commando Brigade.

out on the Bassein Peninsula. Our own position was as follows: 81 West African Division and the greater part of 50 Indian Tank Brigade were being withdrawn from Arakan, so as to ease the strain on maintenance; and a programme was being provisionally prepared for evacuating other formations as soon as their operations were completed. 25 Indian Division was still engaged in mopping-up the Kangaw–Myebon area, where 82 West African Division was also attacking from the north; while 3 Commando Brigade, after five weeks of hard fighting, was now concentrating at Myebon. 26 Indian Division, after its initial successful landing on Ramree Island, at Kyaukpyu, had been engaged in a hard struggle for the rest of the Island; but the town of Ramree had fallen on the 9th February, and by the 16th all organised resistance on the Island had ceased.

412. Lieut.-General Christison's plan was to engage, and if possible destroy, those elements of 54 Japanese Division which remained in the An area; and then to exert pressure against the Taungup area, so as to prevent (or at any rate retard) the withdrawal of the remainder of the division eastward over the Taungup Pass to Prome. In the An area, 82 West African Division was to advance overland from the north, while 25 Indian Division made an amphibious landing at Ru-ywa, to the west of the town. When An had been encircled and captured, Taungup would be the next objective.[1] In their drive southward from An to Taungup, our forces would be assisted by an amphibious landing, made by 26 Indian Division, at Letpan: to cut the An–Taungup coastal road behind the enemy. The Force Commanders decided that the Ru-ywa landing should be made on the 16th February, the earliest date by which Force 64 could complete the maintenance and repair of its landing-craft, and other necessary preparations.

413. The amphibious force was to be mounted from Myebon; and this involved a sea trip to Ru-ywa of about 45 miles—which could not be undertaken without towing the small landing-craft. It was therefore decided to set up an advanced base, some days before D-Day, on an island about 10 miles to the north-west of Ru-ywa, and 10 miles due west of the Dalet Chaung ferry. It was hoped that these preparations might divert attention from Ru-ywa, and make it appear that an amphibious assault was contemplated on the important Dalet Chaung crossing. While the advanced base was being prepared, therefore, sloops bombarded Tamandu; while Commando raids were made at points along the coast to confuse the enemy about our intentions. Shortly before D-Day, reconnaissance parties of 3 Commando Brigade discovered a small unoccupied island, four miles from the chosen landing-point; and the Force Commanders decided to use this for extra support. A battery of medium artillery was landed; stores were ferried across from the advanced base; and a small airstrip was constructed—all this, without the enemy's knowledge.

414. In general, the chaungs in Southern Arakan are more shallow and treacherous than in the north; and for a week before the landings reconnaissance parties, working under most difficult conditions, had been trying to find suitable chaung approaches and landing-points. A site had finally been chosen in a very small, un-named chaung, about two miles north-west of Ru-ywa; but from a naval point of view, reconnaissance had made it clear that the operation was going to be extremely hazardous. On the 16th February, a brigade of 25 Indian Division, supported by Hurricanes and Thunderbolts of 224 Group and by three sloops, landed against only slight opposition. The concealed artillery battery gave useful support to the assault troops. The initial landing took the enemy completely by surprise. His reaction was slow and on the 17th February Ru-ywa village was reached. On the 19th, the enemy made his first determined attack on the bridgehead; and the landing beach was so heavily shelled that supplies had to be diverted and a new beach opened (within the bridgehead) a few hundred yards from the village. The attack was beaten off only after severe hand-to-hand fighting; and in the following week our bridgeheads were reinforced by further brigades.

415. In the last week of February, Lieut.-General Christison's plan had to be drastically curtailed. Air-supply for 15 Corps had originally been assessed at 130 tons a day until the end of March; but the Fourteenth Army, engaged on the line of the Irrawaddy and about to undertake the capture of Meiktila and Mandalay and the overland thrust to Rangoon, would now require more and more air-supply. Owing to the overall shortage of transport aircraft, it would only be possible to meet these requirements by cutting 15 Corps' allocation to 30 tons a day—which would bring operations in Arakan virtually to an end. In particular, the plan for the encirclement of 54 Japanese Division at An would have to be abandoned; for these operations would have been undertaken in some of the most densely-covered mountainous country in Arakan, and 82 West African Division would have had to be entirely supplied by air. From now on, it would only be possible, in this area, to carry out harassing operations.

[1] See Map 28 (facing page 128).

416. The organisation of co-ordinated ground operations and air support in the forthcoming Fourteenth Army advance was now in full swing. Already on the 1st January, Army Headquarters and 221 Group Headquarters had moved forward from Imphal to Kalemyo, where a joint Army/Air Headquarters had been set up. The 221 Group component of this joint Headquarters consisted of a small operational staff; for its Main Headquarters remained at Imphal, which was still the Group's main airfield centre—for the long-range fighter-bombers had to stay based on Imphal,[1] since shortage of land and air transport would not allow of fuel, bombs and ammunition being brought forward to the Shwebo area. Daily conferences were held at the joint Fourteenth Army/221 Group Headquarters between senior staff officers of Fourteenth Army and 221 Group; a bombing committee was also set up to co-ordinate tactical bombing in areas immediately behind the enemy; and, finally, R.A.F. officers were appointed at the Headquarters of 4 and 33 Corps to act as air advisers to the Corps Commanders and to maintain close touch between the Corps Commanders and the joint Fourteenth Army/221 Group Headquarters.

417. At this time, 221 Group consisted of six squadrons of Hurricanes (including one from the Royal Indian Air Force) and three squadrons of Thunderbolts (P-47) for close support; four squadrons of Spitfires for defence; three squadrons of Beaufighters and Mosquitos for long-range tactical work; two squadrons of Hurricanes for tactical reconnaissance work; a detachment of night-fighting Beaufighters; and a detachment of Spitfires for photographic reconnaissance. Many of its units had been moving forward from Assam into Burma: a considerable undertaking, for the roads used had greatly deteriorated under heavy military traffic. The Army had originally been responsible for bringing R.A.F. units forward; but shortage of transport now prevented them from doing this, and 221 Group was thrown back on its own meagre resources.

418. These moves forward were a particular strain on the Army/Air Force signals organisations. As land lines lengthened, telephonic communication became less and less practicable, and wireless was increasingly used; there was a serious shortage of wireless equipment, particularly in C.C.T.F./C.A.A.T.O., the scope of whose activities was increasing daily; and it soon became clear that, as originally conceived, the organisation was definitely under-equipped.[2] As we advanced into Central Burma, the shortage of signals equipment was aggravated by damage to the more delicate types of equipment through its having to be carried over extremely bad roads. Signal communications within 221 Group were at times so strained that, if the enemy had been able to put up serious opposition from the air, the inter-communication system could not possibly have handled the consequent heavy increase in traffic.

419. The bulk of 221 Group's forward units was now based on the Shwebo Plain, where several airfields already existed, and which was flat enough for the quick construction of new strips. Airfields had been built at Kan and Sinthe[3] to support 4 Corps' operations in the Gangaw Valley, and the establishment of 7 Indian Division's bridgehead; and now that 33 Corps was consolidating for the capture of Shwebo for the coming advance, 221 Group established itself in sites as near as possible to the Irrawaddy. Onbauk, Tabingaung, and Monywa, as they fell, were chosen as the main bases from which close support to the Irrawaddy crossings and the subsequent battles could most effectively be given.

420. The engineers of A.L.F.S.E.A., Fourteenth Army, and subordinate formations were responsible for repairing the existing airfields—many of which had been partly demolished or booby-trapped—and for building new strips on sites chosen by 221 Group. There was never any serious hold-up, although much of the heavy equipment required had to be brought over the exiguous land lines of communication from Dimapur—which were overworked and were fast deteriorating under the greatly increased traffic. The Army was responsible in the first instance for the defence of these forward airfields: which was necessary even in areas some distance from the front, because night raids were frequently made by small parties of Japanese who had not been mopped up. As the battle increased in scope and intensity, however, Lieut.-General Slim found it impossible to meet this commitment; and airfield defence became a joint responsibility of the Army and the R.A.F. Regiment.

421. The commitments of 221 Group were also increasing: it was becoming clear that the Fourteenth Army would eventually need more air-support than the Group, with its present strength, could provide. At the end of January, however, the U.S. 12th Bombardment Group had been put at the disposal of Air Vice-Marshal S. F. Vincent, as and when he

[1] Though Imphal was administratively convenient, these aircraft had to fly 400 or 500 miles to their targets, which were mostly enemy Headquarters, bridges and installations in Southern and South-Eastern Burma.

[2] It was chiefly in this respect that the American system on the N.C.A.C. front was superior (see "B", paragraphs 340 and 341).

[3] Which was made operational after five days.

would require it; and Major-General Stratemeyer also made arrangements for the 10th U.S.A.A.F. (primarily concerned with supporting N.C.A.C. operations), the Strategic Air Force and 224 Group (both of these being no longer heavily committed in Arakan), to give as much support as possible whenever 221 Group required it. This arrangement gave 221 Group a considerable increase, potentially at any rate, in medium and heavy bomber strength; and it was planned to make the greatest use, in the Fourteenth Army's coming operations, of "earthquake attacks"—which had already proved effective in demolishing the enemy's concentrations, and his morale. A special wireless link was opened by Eastern Air Command between its own Headquarters and those of 221 Group, 224 Group and the 10th U.S.A.A.F.—which was to be reserved for high-priority operational signals relating to Fourteenth Army operations.

422. In the meantime, 221 Group (assisted on occasions by Strategic Air Force) was increasing its effective attacks not only on enemy troops and positions in close support of our ground forces, but also on vital bridges, installations, Headquarters and other important enemy centres, far and wide behind the Japanese lines. Concerted attacks were also made on enemy airfields, which not only prevented the Japanese from interfering with the advance of our ground forces, but shattered the protective air screen with which he was trying to surround Southern Burma. For long-range aircraft of 221 Group, as well as those of Strategic Air Force, struck at bases in the Rangoon area, to prevent the Japanese from reinforcing their forward airfields. The enemy was already gravely hampered in his attempts to carry out a coherent plan of air strategy in Burma; and as the Fourteenth Army forged ahead, he was to be given less and less room in which to deploy his aircraft—while we were to be able to attack his decreasing number of airfields at ever-closer range and with ever-increasing weight.

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By the end of January, the enemy was fully aware of the rapid build-up of 20 Indian Division, under 33 Corps, on the north bank of the Irrawaddy in the area west of Mandalay; but he still believed—as Lieut.-General Slim had hoped that he might—that 19 Indian Division, in its bridgeheads at Thabeikkyin and Kyaukmyaung, was under the command of 4 Corps. He consequently deduced that 19 Indian Division's crossings were to be followed by the whole of 4 Corps; and that both 4 and 33 Corps were to the west of the Irrawaddy, massing for one drive to the north of Mandalay and for another from a point immediately to the west of the town. The enemy was further confused by the gradual southward advance of 36 British Division: which appeared to indicate a joint offensive by the Fourteenth Army and the N.C.A.C. forces. He therefore decided to concentrate all available forces on the destruction of 19 Indian Division; and since N.C.A.C. had been weakened by the withdrawal of two Chinese divisions, he was unfortunately able to divert the whole of 15 and 53 Japanese Divisions, together with a force of tanks,[1] against 19 Indian Division before it had consolidated its bridgeheads.

424. Very strong concentrations of artillery—the heaviest that our troops had so far had to face—were built up around these two bridgeheads; the enemy bringing up not only the divisional artillery of 15 and 53 Japanese Divisions, but also odd batteries from other Japanese divisions. The enemy launched one infantry attack after another, day and night, for nearly a month; but although 19 Indian Division had less than three months' battle experience, they fought like veteran troops and beat off the Japanese attacks. Squadrons of Thunderbolts (P-47) and Mitchells (B-25) (which made several sorties a day during the critical period) carried out very successful operations against the enemy artillery positions, and on one occasion, after a heavy attack by Mitchells (B-25) the enemy's artillery remained silent for 48 hours. Every night 221 Group sent over all types of aircraft—including Harvard (AT-6) training aircraft!—to spot the flashes of the guns and mark their positions. On these occasions the enemy usually decided it was more prudent to hold his fire than to give away his positions.

425. In his attacks on 19 Indian Division's bridgeheads, the enemy repeated the mistake he had made at Kohima, and continued his tactics long after it should have become clear to him that they had miscarried: increasing the number of casualties among his own troops, and achieving nothing but the erosion of his own effort. Early in February the two bridgeheads were obviously secure: in fact, 19 Indian Division had already begun to extend its perimeter. This gallant resistance was a valuable contribution to the whole campaign, for it succeeded in diverting and engaging a large number of Japanese troops while our main strength was massing elsewhere.

426. Lieut.-General Slim had now to decide whether the main crossings should be made

[1] These operations were carried out under the command of Thirty-third Japanese Army (Lieut.-General Honda), which had since March, 1944, been responsible for operations against N.C.A.C.

simultaneously by both Corps; or whether one should cross before the other—and if so, which. There was much to be said in favour of following up the existing bridgeheads to the north, by putting across another division of 33 Corps at some point west of Mandalay; for this would reinforce the enemy's belief that our main thrust was being made from this direction. On the other hand, it was important that 4 Corps should secure a bridgehead and establish itself as soon as possible (so that 17 Indian Division and 255 Indian Tank Brigade could concentrate there), and then dash on towards Meiktila with the least possible delay. Lieut.-General Slim therefore decided that one division from each Corps should cross simultaneously; for he reckoned that, even if the Japanese considered 4 Corps the greater menace, they would be unable to take effective action against it, owing to the considerable pressure that 33 Corps would be in a position to exert, north and south-west of Mandalay.

427. At Thabeikkyin and Kyaukmyaung, the Irrawaddy flows through jungle-covered hills and is only about 500 yards wide. But south of Kyaukmyaung the country opens out and the river broadens considerably, its average width being 2,000 yards; while at its junction with the Chindwin between Myingyan and Pakokku it is about 4,000 yards across. The current varies from one to two knots in the dry season, and from five to six knots during the rains. In the narrow parts of the river the banks shelve steeply; and in the broad stretches, where the banks are low, navigation is frequently obstructed by islands and sandbanks—the latter being difficult to plot with accuracy, since they are apt to change position after each monsoon. For this reason, the actual crossing-points could not be pre-selected; and the details of where and how the crossings were to be made had to be decided by the Corps and Divisional Commanders from detailed reconnaissances[1] carried out on the spot. The equipment available for the crossings was pitifully inadequate. Everything had had to be carried over hundreds of miles of bad roads; and on their arrival at the embarkation areas many of the boats had been found to be damaged beyond repair; while there was a serious shortage of outboard engines, and most of those available were not powerful enough for the purpose. It had been possible to supplement this equipment with a few captured Japanese pontoons; but these subsequently turned out to be of a poor type, and unsuitable for anything but bridging.

428. Major-General Stratemeyer arranged for the Fourteenth Army to receive additional air-support during critical stages of the coming battle.[2] An agreed Army/Air Force plan of selective bombing was to be carried out, designed to cause the greatest hindrance to the enemy's movements, while preserving vital bridges and viaducts[3] that we should need for carrying our own troops in their final dash to the south. This plan would at least give the army engineers a chance to estimate the equipment required for repairs: an important consideration in view of the difficulties of bringing up Bailey bridges and other heavy equipment. 221 Group would support the actual crossings; and the Strategic Air Force was ordered to maintain its whole strength (less 12 aircraft) in readiness for supporting the ground forces in the Mandalay area. It was planned to isolate this area by attacks on the Maymyo–Lashio road and on the road and railway system linking Mandalay with Southern Burma, synchronised with planned attacks on the main enemy airfields in Central Burma: Pyinmana, Lewe, He-ho, Kunlon, and Aungban. 224 Group was ordered to place one Wing and a U.S.A.A.F. fighter squadron on permanent call for Air Vice-Marshal Vincent, from the 10th February; and Major-General Davidson was instructed to assist with squadrons of 10th U.S.A.A.F., so far as his primary commitment in N.C.A.C. allowed.

429. No. 1 and No. 2 Air Commandos (which came directly under Eastern Air Command) were made responsible by day for all close tactical support in the important operations against Meiktila; but as they were based on Arakan, they would not be able to cover the battle-front in the early morning and late evening—and these periods were therefore made the responsibility of 221 Group. Although Air Vice-Marshal Vincent would be directing the policy of all tactical air operations in Central Burma, General Arnold would not allow the Air Commandos to operate under direct British control. In order to ensure close liaison, therefore, between the Army and Air Force Headquarters concerned, the Thunderbolt (P-47) squadrons of No. 1 Air Commando and the Mustang (P-51) squadrons of No. 2 Air Commando—which had been specially assigned for close support in the Meiktila battle—were placed temporarily under Brigadier-General Evans[4] and he in his turn appointed a liaison officer to 4 Corps Headquarters, who would keep him in close touch with the progress of the land battle.

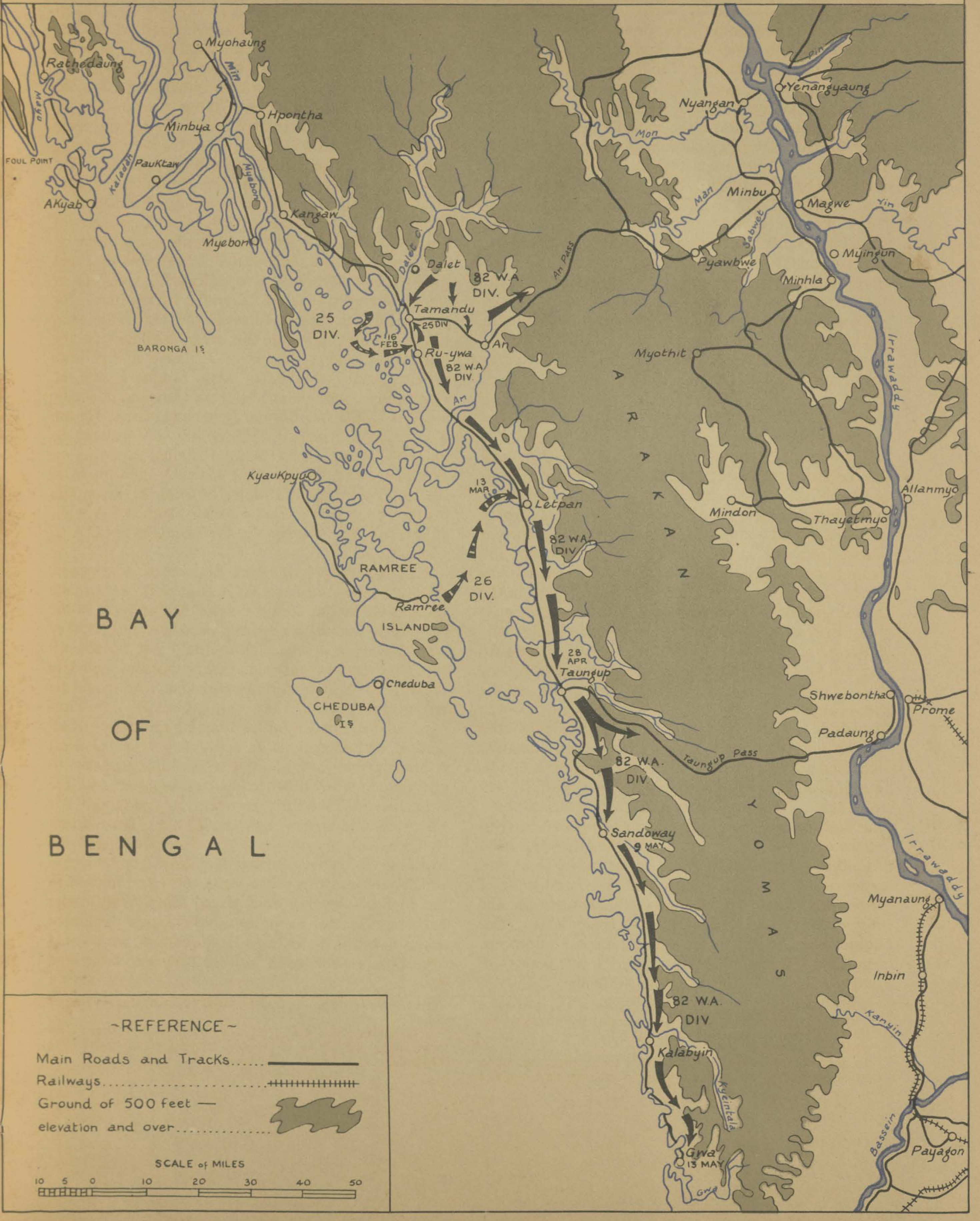
[1] These were made, as they had been for the Chindwin crossings, by specially trained and equipped swimmers of the inter-service Sea Reconnaissance Unit.

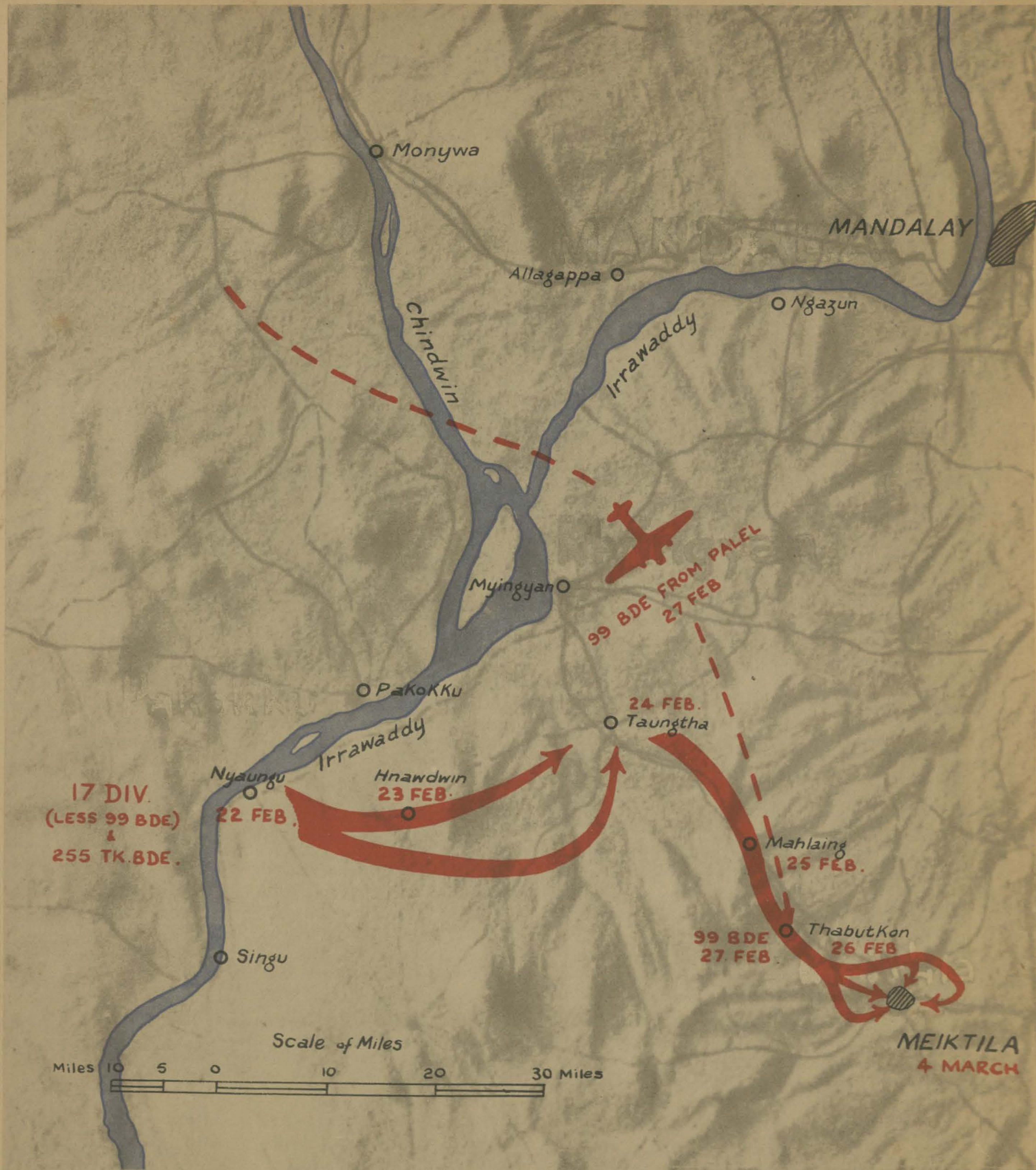
[2] See "B", paragraph 421.

[3] In general, the Japanese had proved to be incompetent in destroying bridges: as well as being so dilatory that a quick thrust by our troops frequently resulted in capturing bridges intact.

[4] Who commanded C.C.T.F., and would be responsible for controlling the fly-in of the air-transportable brigades to Meiktila.

# ARAKAN OPERATIONS : RU-YWA — GWA (MAP 28)






MAP 29. ASSAULT ON MEIKTILA

430. On the 33 Corps front, the crossing of the Irrawaddy was led by 20 Indian Division, which began to cross in the Myinmu–Allagappa area[1], against slight opposition, on the night of the 12th February. Lieut.-General Kimura, since he could not dispose his forces along 200 miles of river bank, had concentrated his main forces at a few likely crossing-places; the intervening spaces were watched by small detachments, and the mobile reserves were held well back so that they could be quickly switched to any sector of the front. Allagappa was on the exact boundary between 31 and 33 Japanese Divisions: our unexpected choice confused the enemy in the first instance, and in the first 24 hours we had secured a bridgehead six miles broad and two miles deep. Early on the 15th, however, Japanese opposition began: 20 Indian Division was attacked from the air and sustained considerable damage to its crossing equipment, although it was able to recover or replace damaged boats. By the 16th, in the face of increasing opposition from enemy ground troops, the division had extended and consolidated its bridgehead sufficiently for daylight crossings to be possible; and was beginning to take the offensive.

431. The enemy now began to bring up the whole weight of his reserves against the bridgehead, which he believed to be our main one; and for the next ten days 20 Indian Division was to be engaged in prolonged and bitter struggle, during which some of the fiercest fighting on this front took place. On the 19th, a force of Hurricanes discovered a concentration of carefully camouflaged medium tanks, which they attacked with cannon and rockets, until eleven were destroyed or put out of action. This was a serious setback for the enemy, for he had only one tank regiment in Burma; but the fact that he was employing part of it in this action showed what importance he attached to its outcome. Lieut.-General Stopford considered that the destruction of these tanks was a major factor in the consolidation of 20 Indian Division's bridgehead: the division continued to beat back fierce enemy counter-attacks, in which the Japanese were suffering extremely heavy casualties. Individual units arriving at the front were committed to battle by the enemy before being drawn up as coherent divisions or regiments: it is hard to understand why he failed to realise the futility of these piecemeal reinforcements, but the fact remains that he continued this tactic throughout the campaign.

432. Close-support squadrons of 221 Group gave invaluable assistance to 20 Indian Division, most of whose actions were preceded by rocket and fighter-bomber attacks. During the critical period, continuous patrols were maintained by a system known as "Cab Rank," which involved constant daylight patrols over a selected area by two fighter aircraft at a time, in relays; they remained permanently in touch with Visual Control Posts on the ground, and could be directed on to a particular target at a moment's notice. By the 27th February, Japanese resistance had been overcome and 20 Indian Division had extended its bridgehead to a width of eight miles and a depth of two-and-a-half.

433. On the 4 Corps front, in the meantime, the assault had opened on the night of the 13th February (one day later than the 33 Corps crossing) with the crossing of 7 Indian Division at Nyaungu. In spite of difficulties of navigation[2] and the breakdown of many of the outboard motors in the powered craft, the crossings were successful; and by the 15th a whole brigade and a small force of tanks were firmly established on the east bank. A fortnight beforehand, we discovered that we had again chosen an area which lay exactly on a Japanese inter-formation boundary: this time, between his Fifteenth and Twenty-eighth Armies. Nyaungu was, topographically, an unlikely crossing-place, and was therefore covered by only a weak enemy force; we made two local feints (at Pakokku and at Chauk)—the enemy swallowed the bait and concentrated strong forces opposite both these places. The operation had been well planned and came as a complete surprise to the enemy. (A captured Intelligence officer of Twenty-eighth Japanese Army H.Q. later revealed that the enemy had assumed—as Lieut.-General Slim had intended—that only one division had been advancing down the Gangaw Valley; and that it would remain on the west bank of the Irrawaddy, and continue to exploit southward towards Yenangyaung.)

434. On the 15th February, the brigade of 7 Indian Division which had established a bridgehead proceeded to capture Pagan; and on the west bank another brigade captured Pakokku, and began to clear the large island which lies off the town. Within a week, the enemy had begun to attack the bridgehead from the south, but the attack was half-hearted, and the evidence of prisoners made it clear that the Japanese still regarded this crossing as a diversion. Lieut.-General Kimura had carefully organised his defences on the line of the Irrawaddy, and disposed his reserves at tactical points in the rear areas; nevertheless, by the third week in February, in face of severe opposition and using inadequate and improvised equipment, we had brought four divisions and a tank brigade across

[1] See map 26 (on page 117).

[2] This crossing of about one mile, one of the longest undertaken, was made diagonally in a three-knot current to a further bank of forty-foot cliffs, intersected every few hundred yards by deep chaungs.

the river at the cost of very light casualties. Except for the fierce ten-day opposition to the crossing of 20 Indian Division, and sporadic attacks in the Thabeikkyin–Kyaukmyaung bridgeheads, which had continued for more than a month, it was clear that the enemy had accepted his failure to stop us on the line of the Irrawaddy—but his misappreciation of our real intentions led him to suppose that the situation in Central Burma could still be retrieved.

435. Believing that 4 and 33 Corps were both in the Mandalay area, it was there that Lieut.-General Kimura determined to destroy our bridgeheads, before we could deploy in strength on the further side of the river, and launch a general offensive eastward and southward. In order to do this, he was prepared to concentrate every available man in Central Burma, even if this meant withdrawing his men from Arakan as well as from the N.C.A.C. front—and even if this gave us the whole trace of the road, through Lashio, from Northern Burma into China. He was also prepared to disregard the threat of a seaborne landing from the south, so vital did he consider the need to be for concentrating his divisions in Central Burma; and by the end of February he was collecting reinforcements from all over the country.

436. From Arakan, 54 Japanese Division was ordered to move as quickly as possible over the An–Minbu and Taungup–Prome roads, and to concentrate north of Yenangyaung in the Irrawaddy Valley—leaving rearguards to block the two roads, after it had withdrawn, to prevent 15 Corps from following up. From their North-Eastern front, which was held by 18 and 56 Japanese Divisions, one regiment of 2 Division and two regiments of 49 Division under 33 Army, the Japanese withdrew all but 56 Division which was left alone facing three Chinese divisions and the MARS Brigade. Finally, from Southern Burma and the Bassein Peninsula the remainder of 49 Japanese Division and one regiment of 55 Japanese Division were moved up and concentrated south of Mandalay, while a second regiment of 2 Japanese Division, under orders to join its divisional headquarters in Siam, was stopped and ordered back to Central Burma. In spite of our bombing attacks on his communications the enemy carried out these moves with remarkable efficiency and speed; and the arrival of these formations meant that the Japanese build-up against Fourteenth Army now consisted of some nine divisions (seven and two-thirds Japanese; one and one-third Indian National Army), as well as a large number of lines of communication troops, all of whom were capable of fighting.

437. At this time, Lieut.-General Slim had six divisions and two armoured brigades in the forward area on both banks of the Irrawaddy. Their movement and supply were a great strain on the air transport squadrons and on the Army's administrative services; but all the formations he had planned to deploy were nevertheless brought in on time and supplied during the critical months of February and March. Lieut.-General Kimura's drive against 33 Corps was now in full swing; and 4 Corps could not hope for a more favourable opportunity for the breakthrough to Meiktila, on which the success of Lieut.-General Slim's strategic plan depended. This operation was planned to take place in six phases[1]:—

(*a*) the crossing of the Irrawaddy, to the Nyaungu bridgehead, by the two mechanised brigades of 17 Indian Division and 255 Indian Tank Brigade, which was to be followed by the capture of Hnawdwin and exploitation to the east;

(*b*) the capture of Mahlaing, which was to be followed by the sealing-off or capture of Taungtha: the whole force was then to concentrate in Mahlaing;

(*c*) the capture of an airstrip in or near Meiktila for the fly-in of the air-transportable brigade of 17 Indian Division;

(*d*) the isolation of Meiktila;

(*e*) the capture of Meiktila; and

(*f*) the capture of Thazi[2].

438. The two mechanised brigades of 17 Indian Division, and 255 Indian Tank Brigade, began to cross the Irrawaddy to the bridgehead at Nyaungu as soon as it was secure, and by the 22nd February were completely established on the east bank ready for the dash to Meiktila. The leading brigade had started to advance without delay on the previous day, followed closely by the rest of the division and 255 Indian Tank Brigade. In spite of the difficult country and the deep dry chaung crossings east of Hnawdwin, which delayed the tanks, the force pushed on rapidly in two columns; and on the 24th February, they captured Taungtha (which proved to be the maintenance centre for 33 Japanese Division and all troops to the north-west) and with it a great deal of supplies, equipment and ammunition of all kinds.

[1] See Map 29 (facing page 129).

[2] See Map 31 (facing page 137).

439. Moving swiftly down the main road to Meiktila, 17 Indian Division captured Mahlaing on the 25th February, and the airstrip at Thabutkon, about fifteen miles north-west of Meiktila, on the 26th; this was at once prepared for the fly-in of the air-transportable brigade from Palel, which began on the following day. The main force then drove onwards towards Meiktila, and on the 27th was ready to launch the main assault on the town. On the 24th, 33 Corps had again attracted the enemy's attention: 2 British Division having begun, against fierce opposition, to cross the river at Ngazun, about ten miles east of 20 Indian Division's bridgehead.

440. The Meiktila–Thazi area, which abounded in supply dumps, hospitals and other administrative centres, was the nodal point of road and rail communications in Central and Southern Burma; and the town of Meiktila was the advanced supply base for all the Japanese forces in Northern and Central Burma. Due northward from this area run the main road and railway to Mandalay (which supplied the enemy forces opposing 19 Indian Division and N.C.A.C.); north-westward to Myingyan,[1] and then north-eastward to Mandalay, runs a secondary line of communication (which was supplying the troops opposing 2 British Division and 20 Indian Division); southward from this area run the main railway and road to Rangoon; westward, there is road communication (via Kyaukpadaung) with the Irrawaddy Valley; and finally, to the east, there runs the road link between Burma and Northern Siam. At Meiktila were most of the important Japanese airfields; and their capture was vital to our plans, for if we seized Meiktila the whole structure of the Japanese defence of Central Burma would collapse.

441. The enemy had been preparing for some time to put up a desperate defence of Meiktila and its surroundings; and by the 27th February he had assembled about 12,000 men in and around the town: besides which there was a collection of between 1,000 and 2,000 miscellaneous troops mustered for close fighting and supplied with arms and ammunition from the well-stocked dumps in the area. These miscellaneous troops, which included the personnel of artillery, signals, administrative and other service units, as well as recently discharged hospital patients, were ordered to fight to the last man. They included airfield defence units, and anti-aircraft batteries which were now turned to ground defence; for now that he had lost his airfields west and north of the Irrawaddy, the enemy had at all costs to retain the Meiktila group of airfields—and he fully appreciated that these would be one of the main objectives of our attack.

442. The garrison of the town itself numbered between 3,000 and 4,000, and was commanded by Major-General Kasuya, Commander of the area Field Transport Command. It was provided with excellent defensive positions in bunkers, houses, strong-points, and supply-dumps. If the sieges of Myitkyina and Bhamo (where the enemy had resisted for weeks with fewer troops) were to be taken as analogies for the siege of Meiktila, the outlook was not very promising. The approaches to Meiktila from the west and south were very difficult, being narrowed by large lakes, so that the lines of advance suitable for tanks were very restricted and easily covered by artillery. Throughout the surrounding area the deployment of armour was hampered by broken country and deep irrigation cuts.

443. The assault on Meiktila began at dawn on the 28th February from four directions; and by nightfall after very heavy fighting, the town was entirely surrounded. Three days and nights of savage hand-to-hand fighting followed; in which small units of our infantry, supported by tanks, fought their way into the centre of the town—killing and blasting the enemy: bunker by bunker, and house by house. Almost every Japanese was armed with an automatic weapon, with which he fought to the death. By early morning on the 4th March the greater part of Meiktila, including the principal airfield (Meiktila Main) and the railway station, was in our hands. A few remaining suicide parties were cleared up during the next few days, and when the battle was over more than 2,000 bodies were counted in the area of the town alone.[2] 47 prisoners, most of them wounded, were taken; and 48 guns. The fly-in of 17 Indian Division's air-transportable brigade had now been completed, without the loss of a single aircraft or man; and the brigade at once moved into battle. The airstrip at Thabutkon was now abandoned, and Meiktila Main prepared as the main landing-point for troops and supplies in the area. When the town was secured, mobile columns of infantry, guns and armour spread out into the open country, and the Japanese columns of infantry, guns and lorries, moving up to reinforce Meiktila and Mandalay, were quite unprepared to resist this avalanche of mechanised forces.

444. The loss of Meiktila was a great blow to Lieut.-General Kimura. He did not know the identity of the force which had struck—since he still supposed that

[1] The river port which we needed as the terminal for inland water transport on the Chindwin.

[2] The Japanese subsequently admitted that they had lost 5,000 killed, and as many wounded, in the battle.

4 Corps and 33 Corps were together at the northern end of the front—but he knew that the situation must at all costs be retrieved. He therefore immediately threw over his plan to concentrate all his forces against 33 Corps; and now diverted to Meiktila all the formations earmarked for the Mandalay battle—even withdrawing some of the troops already fighting against 33 Corps, and throwing them in against 4 Corps. But he still intended to carry on what he considered to be the decisive battle on the Irrawaddy; and thinking that he could retrieve the position at Meiktila and then concentrate all his forces on liquidating our bridgeheads, he kept a large force in the Mandalay area—a course which later events showed to have been a fatal blunder.

445. As a precautionary measure in view of his ultimate intentions, Lieut.-General Kimura ordered the improvement of the cart-tracks running southward, parallel with the main road from Mandalay—but to the east of it, so as to by-pass Meiktila and Thazi—to provide a new line of communication from north to south, for his troops. But the enemy had been caught completely "on the wrong foot", and would now have to meet the combined and rapidly increasing forces of 4 and 33 Corps, as well as continuous attacks by the squadrons of Eastern Air Command. For Lieut.-General Kimura to plan the redisposition of his forces was one thing; to complete the necessary troop movements, at short notice and without air superiority, was quite another matter.

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It was at this promising juncture that the situation in China again interfered with our operations. On the 23rd February, Lieut.-General Sultan telegraphed that Lieut.-General Wedemeyer, acting on instructions from the Generalissimo, was about to ask that all U.S. and Chinese forces in N.C.A.C. should be transferred to China. This was a great blow. In our overall plans for the campaign I had had to decide whether to reckon on being able to retain the assistance of the U.S. and Chinese forces in the theatre, or not, and I had decided to "count them in".[1] But two good Chinese divisions had already been recalled in December, and the effect that this further transfer might have on our operations could not accurately be foreseen—but it seemed likely that the advance of Fourteenth Army would be gravely hampered. For it was clear that if these troops were removed, Lieut.-General Sultan would have to halt his troops on a line Lashio–Hsipaw–Kyaukme, and there would be no prospect of their being able to support Lieut.-General Slim's advance with a strong push further to the south.

447. I had naturally no desire to retain the forces in question for longer than they were actually needed for current operations; but if any further forces were withdrawn before Rangoon had been captured and firmly secured, there was a risk that this vital port would not be captured before the monsoon set in—and this would throw the strategic time-table of operations in South-East Asia completely out of gear. In the meanwhile, it seemed that the most urgent requirement of the China theatre was the MARS Brigade; and Lieut.-General Wedemeyer put in a firm request that one regiment of the Brigade should be moved before the 10th March, and the remainder by the 1st April.[2]

448. On the 8th March I went to Chungking to put my case before the Generalissimo. Unfortunately, after the arrangements for the visit had been agreed, Lieut.-General Wedemeyer was recalled to Washington for discussions; we had, however, been able to arrange a meeting in Calcutta, at which we had jointly examined the points which would be discussed in Chungking. Apart from the effect that the proposed withdrawals might have on our operations in Central and Southern Burma, I pointed out that the security of the Stilwell Road had to be taken into consideration. N.C.A.C. was still responsible for its detailed protection; and if this were now to become a commitment of British or Indian formations, the advance on Rangoon would be gravely imperilled: as we had no troops that we could spare from present and future operations. If the Generalissimo proved unwilling to relinquish sufficient Chinese troops, for patrolling the Road until they could be relieved by formations from Europe, it would have to be left without close guards—though the continued advance of the Fourteenth Army was of course the best guarantee of its overall safety.

449. When I met the Generalissimo, I tried to persuade him to cancel, or at least postpone, his demands; and to give Lieut.-General Sultan permission to continue his thrust. I gave him a report of our progress in Burma, and stressed the vital importance of the present battles in the central plains, where the Japanese had now concentrated about 50,000 troops. I pointed out how important it was not only for the South-East Asia theatre, but for the China

[1] See "B", paragraph 397.

[2] The early transfer was also requested of one of the U.S. Aviation Engineer battalions; and I ordered that this should be sent immediately.

theatre as well, that the whole of Burma should be cleared before the monsoon started in May. I further pointed out the danger of weakening the N.C.A.C. front before the issue at Mandalay and at Rangoon had been decided; and that Lieut.-General Leese, Lieut.-General Slim and myself were all agreed that it would make all the difference to the speed of these operations if the Chinese and U.S. forces were to continue to exert pressure against 56 Japanese Division and the remaining elements of 18 Japanese Division, which would otherwise be thrown in against the Fourteenth Army.

450. The Generalissimo did not agree with my appreciation: on the contrary, he advised me to check the Fourteenth Army's advance at Mandalay—in any case, he wished the Chinese advance to be halted on the Lashio–Hsipaw line. I again made it clear that for logistical reasons it would be extremely difficult for us to remain in the Mandalay area through the monsoon; and that unless we succeeded in opening the port of Rangoon, we might have to withdraw to areas with more secure land lines of communication. In emphasising that I was not suggesting that Chinese troops should fight south of Mandalay, but merely that they should continue to engage the Japanese in the area north-east of Mandalay while the Fourteenth Army was fighting its critical battles in Central Burma, I warned the Generalissimo that retreat at this stage would not only wreck our own plans in Burma, but would also expose the Stilwell Road and the old Burma Road to Japanese incursions.

451. The Generalissimo replied that he planned to carry out a counter-offensive in China, if possible before the autumn, in order to recapture the provinces of Hunan and Kwangsi which had formerly provided most of the rice for "Free China", which was now facing starvation. To undertake this counter-offensive he was proposing to form fifteen new divisions immediately, which would eventually be built up to thirty-nine American-equipped divisions; and it was to provide cadres for training these that he required the MARS Brigade. It was clear that he could not be dissuaded from asking for the transfer of these U.S. and Chinese troops, though he wished to await Lieut.-General Wedemeyer's return, to consult him as to the dates for withdrawal; it was also clear that he was determined to halt the advance of the Chinese divisions on the Lashio–Hsipaw line.

452. When I spoke to Lieut.-General Leese about this on my return, he opposed the suggestion that the MARS Brigade should be withdrawn. From the purely A.L.F.S.E.A. point of view, I agreed with him; but I pointed out that the wider inter-theatre interests of the war in the Far East had to be considered, and I reminded him of the directive I had received as recently as the 3rd February.[1] Moreover, Lieut.-General Sultan had pointed out to me that, man for man, the brigade required for its maintenance in the field a far greater air-lift than a similar Chinese formation. I therefore over-ruled Lieut.-General Leese's objection: pointing out that, although additional forces of that quality would of course have been an asset, Lieut.-General Sultan himself doubted if he could afford to use them in pursuit of a retreating enemy, and supply them by air, instead of employing a far greater number of Chinese troops for the same expenditure of supply. On the 11th March, I informed the Chiefs of Staff that I had ordered the immediate release of one regiment of the MARS Brigade; and I decided that the remainder of the brigade should begin to move to China on the 1st April.

453. The N.C.A.C. campaign was now in its final stages. Land communications with China had been restored, and there remained only the task of securing a protective zone to the south: on Lieut.-General Leese's advice, I had given orders on the 6th February that the old Burma Road was to be the boundary of this zone. While the main force of 38 Chinese Division was engaged in establishing contact with the Yunnan Force near Wanting, the remainder of the division, with 30 Chinese Division and MARS Brigade, had advanced at the end of January from Namhkam (some of the units crossing the Loi Lun Range) and cut the old Burma Road at Namhpakka on 4th February. On the same day, the enemy broke contact and withdrew southwards down the Road; having by that time managed to extricate the main body of 56 Japanese Division in this area. On the 19th February, 36 British Division crossed the Shweli River at Myitson in the face of very fierce resistance; and this broke the back of the forces opposing the division—from then on, the enemy was able to stage nothing but local delaying movements in this area.

454. A remarkable feature of the Myitson battle had been the skill with which the pilots of the 10th U.S.A.A.F. kept the bridgehead troops supplied. The bridgehead was only 500 by 300 yards, under continual fire, and anything but the most accurate dropping was useless. Nevertheless, the pilots kept the bridgehead continually supplied[2] until the Japanese were forced to abandon their attempts. In order to bring forward

[1] See "B", paragraph 396.

[2] I was able personally to observe the accuracy of the 10th U.S.A.A.F., in their support at Myitson, during one of my regular visits to this front.

the divisional artillery and transport and subsequently maintain the whole of 36 British Division in its operations south of the river, the divisional engineers built a timber bridge over the Shweli—a feat comparable with the building of the bridge across the Chindwin at Kalewa. At Myitson the river is about 500 yards wide, with a strong current, and the river-bed is composed of soft shifting sand, a most unsuitable foundation for trestles. The bridge was built by an Indian engineer battalion, which had to work almost entirely with hand tools, relying for material on local teak trees growing about a mile from the site; but in spite of these difficulties the bridge was completed in eight days.

455. From Myitson, 36 British Division proceeded to clear Mong Mit on the 10th March, and Mogok on the 20th; from there it turned south-eastward and made contact on the 30th at Kyaukme with the Chinese regiment of MARS Brigade that had advanced south-westward from Hsipaw. On the 1st April, the division turned south-westward down the main road towards Maymyo and Mandalay—passing on that day from the command of N.C.A.C. to that of the Fourteenth Army. Lashio had fallen to the First Chinese Army on the 7th March: this had for all practical purposes been Lieut.-General Sultan's final major objective. By the 16th March, Hsipaw had been occupied; and the line from Lashio to Hsipaw was now secure; for the enemy in this area were gradually breaking contact and withdrawing to the south.

456. Owing to the Generalissimo's insistence, I had agreed that the advance of the Chinese divisions should be stopped on the Lashio–Hsipaw–Kyaukme line; and operations in the Northern Combat Area Command virtually ceased at the end of March. Arrangements were made for the return of the divisions to China, and the first units began to move in May. There remained between 5,000 and 6,000 men of 18 and 56 Japanese Divisions who were still to the south of the line, in the Central Shan States; and these were a potential threat to the eastern flank of the Fourteenth Army—as well as being a possible means of securing the Japanese escape routes and lines of communication from Mandalay and Meiktila into Siam. The task of mopping-up these Japanese stragglers was given to Detachment 101: a force of about 2,500 local guerrillas, led by officers of O.S.S.[1]

457. The pipe-line programme was well on its way to completion. In March, one 4-inch line had been brought as far as Bhamo; and the 6-inch line from Chittagong had reached Tinsukia; in May, the other 4-inch line had reached Kunming, and was delivering petrol (gasoline) to China over a distance of 1,000 miles. It had been decided not to carry the 6-inch line through to China, but to halt it at Myitkyina; which was reached in June. These lines had been laid with remarkable speed, under very difficult conditions; and the completion of the scheme was a great achievement.

458. The advance of the Fourteenth Army meant, as had been foreseen, that transport aircraft now had to make longer and longer flights and extend the area over which they dropped and landed supplies. Constant patrols were flown from dawn to dusk over the battlefront and over enemy airfields from which the Japanese air forces could attack the transport aircraft. These protective operations were extremely effective; nevertheless, the whole transport aircraft situation was extremely critical. We had already been driven to the dangerous expedient of exceeding sustained rates[2]; and it was clear that the whole problem would have to be tackled very firmly if our success in the coming battles was to be ensured.

459. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and Lieut.-General Wedemeyer, while agreeing that the air transport arrangements for the Fourteenth Army should in no way be interfered with until Rangoon been captured, considered that the transport aircraft had assigned to N.C.A.C. could be used for withdrawing the Chinese divisions, without in any way prejudicing our operations. This contention was one that, with the best will in the world, I could not possibly accept. For the entire conduct of land operations was under Lieut.-General Leese's control, and of air operations under that of Major-General Stratemeyer; and since, in theory at any rate, all land and air forces in Burma were regarded as being pooled, there was no reason to treat the air-supply of N.C.A.C. as being distinct from that of the Fourteenth Army and 15 Corps. It had already been necessary, for example, to take 15 Corps off air-supply, so as to give increased support to the Fourteenth Army. The deficiency had been largely made up through supply by sea and chaungs; but operations in Arakan had greatly suffered, and the enemy had been able to transfer forces to the Irrawaddy and Prome areas, and increase their build-up. But this had been preferable to the risk of a failure of air-supply to the Fourteenth Army.

460. Lieut.-General Slim, who now had six divisions and two tank brigades in the Mandalay–Meiktila–Pagan area, was already being forced to take administrative as well as operational risks so as to maintain the momentum of the battle—and the unavoidable

[1] See " B ", paragraph 244 and footnote thereto.

[2] See " B ", paragraph 485.

collapse of Lieut.-General Sultan's offensive had of course added to Lieut.-General Slim's problems. It was therefore quite inacceptable that Fourteenth Army should have to shoulder N.C.A.C.'s commitment (which included the taking-over of 36 British Division and all its supply), without retaining the support of the transport aircraft formerly used for the supply of Lieut.-General Sultan's forces. The British Chiefs of Staff entirely endorsed this view, and informed Washington that they considered that no transport aircraft should be withdrawn from South-East Asia without my agreement.

461. At this stage, Lieut.-General Leese pointed out that unless there was an immediate re-organisation of the transport squadrons supporting the forces under his command, the execution of Lieut.-General Slim's plan to destroy the Japanese Army around Meiktila and Mandalay would be so much delayed that we should not be able to reach Rangoon before the monsoon set in. On the 22nd March, I held a conference at A.L.F.S.E.A. Tactical Headquarters at Monywa[1] to discuss the whole air-supply situation. The meeting was attended by Lieut.-Generals Leese, Slim and Sultan, Major-General Stratemeyer and other Army and Air Force Commanders, as well as by Air Chief Marshal Park. At this meeting, I pointed out that Major-General Stratemeyer naturally had the right to transfer transport aircraft from one front to another, as the necessity arose; but that in practice aircraft available within the Command had not so far been treated as though they were in a common pool. I now decided, however, that all the transport aircraft available in the Command should be transferred in the way that would best enable Lieut.-General Slim to move to the south as quickly as possible, with the greatest possible weight of forces.

462. Now that all offensive operations by the Chinese divisions were at an end, Lieut.-General Leese urged that they should be moved out of Burma as soon as possible, in order to relieve us of their maintenance and make as many transport aircraft as possible available for the supply of Fourteenth Army. I was in complete agreement with this view. The British Chiefs of Staff supported this proposal, recommending to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff that the Chinese divisions should be removed without delay; and negotiations were begun to decide on a time schedule for their withdrawal. The British Chiefs of Staff further recommended that I should not at present be asked to release any further transport aircraft squadrons "owing to the unparalleled intensity of operations"; but they informed me that I must be prepared to release a certain number of squadrons as soon as the situation allowed of this.

463. To strengthen the representations made by the British Chiefs of Staff, the Prime Minister sent a personal message to General Marshall on the 30th March, emphasising the vigour with which our forces had thrown themselves into the land and air fighting in Burma, and the success of the American strategic plan to establish land communications with China: this having been achieved by the junction of Chinese forces from N.C.A.C. and from Yunnan at the end of January. He also pointed out that our campaign had succeeded, even though three British/Indian divisions expected as reinforcements from Europe had had to be retained in Italy; and that, as a consequence of their retention, it had been possible to transfer five British/Canadian divisions from General Alexander's front to General Eisenhower—to the immeasurable advantage of the war against Germany.

464. Mr. Churchill finally suggested that it was only fair and just that I should be given "the comparatively small additional support" which would enable the drive on Rangoon to take place with every chance of success. In his reply to the Prime Minister, on the 4th April, General Marshall said that the Americans had no intention of removing their air resources from South-East Asia before the capture of Rangoon or the 1st June, whichever was the earlier date; and this in fact confirmed an arrangement which had already been made between the U.S. and British Chiefs of Staff. But it was now more important than ever to reach Rangoon not later than May: for if failure to capture the port was to be followed by the withdrawal of most of our transport aircraft, a disastrous retreat, to the nearest point at which the bulk of the Fourteenth Army could be supplied by land, would be forced upon us.

465. In the meantime, on the assumption that the Fourteenth Army would capture Rangoon before the 1st June, the Chiefs of Staff had given preliminary approval to the plans for the Kra Isthmus operation (ROGER), and for Operation ZIPPER, to capture and secure the Port Swettenham–Port Dickson area of Malaya, with four or five divisions, in October, 1945. For I proposed that this should be the next stage in the campaign after the capture of Rangoon; and that the forces would be concentrated in the Port Swettenham–Port Dickson area for the assault on Singapore (Operation MAILFIST), which was to take

[1] The Headquarters of the Fourteenth Army and 221 Group had moved forward from Kalemyo to Monywa on the 8th February. Main Headquarters of 221 Group, which had originally remained at Imphal, was now brought forward; and a joint Army/Air Headquarters was fully established—A.L.F.S.E.A. Tactical Headquarters being also established nearby.

place as soon as possible after ZIPPER. D-Day for ROGER, which would be mounted mainly in Indian ports, was to be the 1st June; ZIPPER would be undertaken with forces from Burma, which would become available when Rangoon had been captured—and Lieut.-General Leese estimated that their withdrawal and preparation would take approximately three to four months. If the time-schedule for ROGER, ZIPPER, and MAILFIST was to be maintained, the early provision of transportation and landing-craft was of vital importance; and the first essential was that the operations should be finally approved as soon as possible, so that the necessary land, sea and air resources could be firmly allocated.

466. We had been promised, in October, 1944, that one amphibious force (Force 'W') would arrive by April, 1945; another (Force 'Y') by June, 1945; and the third (Force 'X') by October, 1945. At the beginning of February, however, we had been informed that although Force 'W' would be completed and despatched as soon as possible, Forces 'Y' and 'X' would not be available until six months and twelve months respectively after the end of the war in Europe[1]—which, it was hoped, should not be later than in June, 1945. I had requested that Force 'W' should arrive without fail in good time for Operation ROGER, and Force 'Y' in time for Operation MAILFIST.

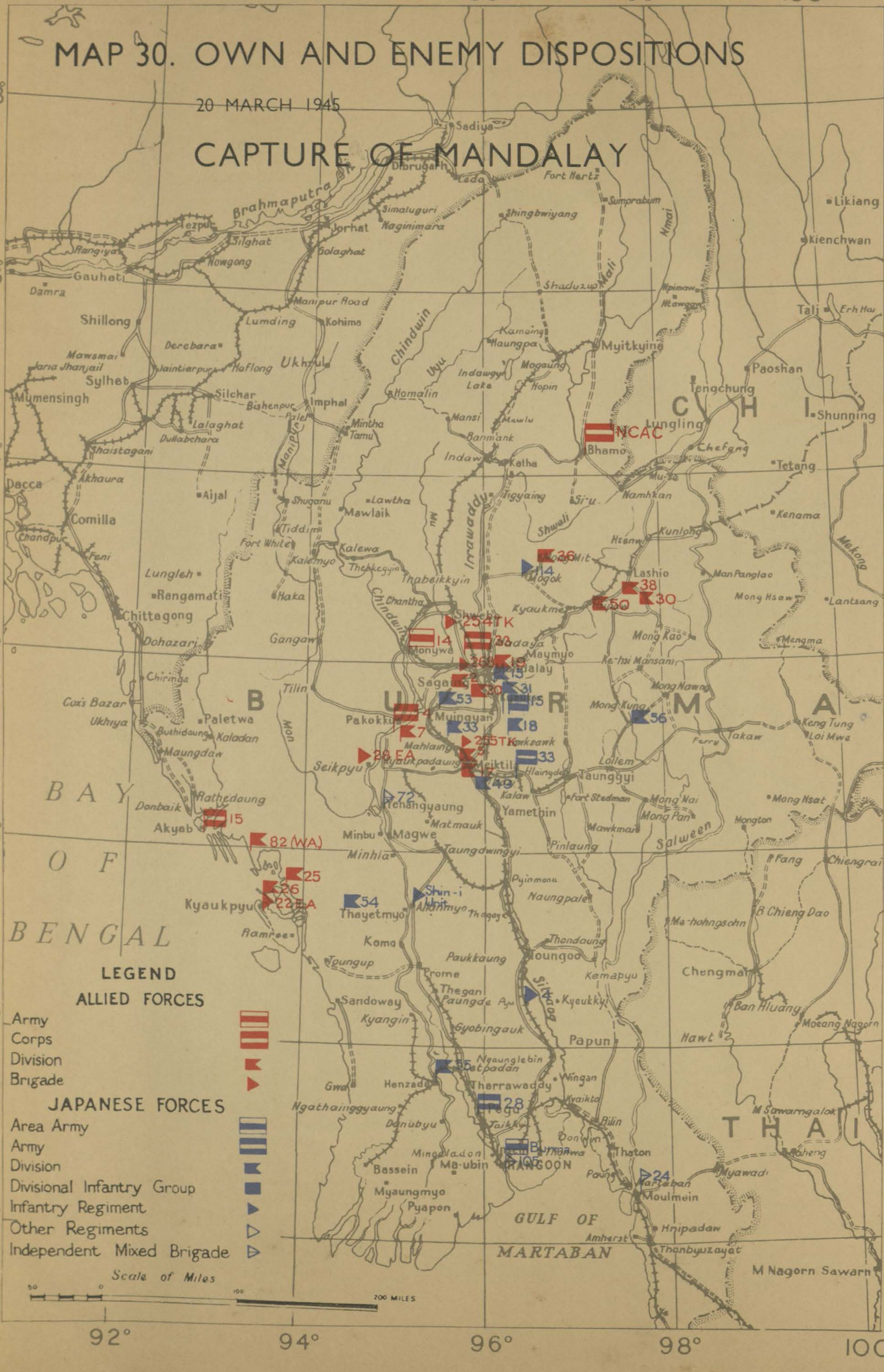
467. I had also signalled Admiral Fraser at the end of February, asking him if he would be prepared to assist Operation ROGER with carrier forces from the British Pacific Fleet; but he had replied that his future commitments were uncertain, and that he would probably be unable to assist. I had also transmitted this proposal to the Chiefs of Staff; but they had informed me that the British Pacific Fleet was to concentrate on the main operations against Japan. On the 28th March, however, the Chiefs of Staff asked Washington to give approval to our programme, and to agree that the necessary resources should be assigned to us as early as possible. They pointed out, however, that they were not convinced that the capture of Rangoon could be completed by the date I had estimated; and they recommended that ROGER should not be started until it was clear beyond all doubt that the fall of Rangoon was imminent.

[1] In the end, Force 'Y' was not formed, except on paper; and Force 'X' was sent to the Pacific.

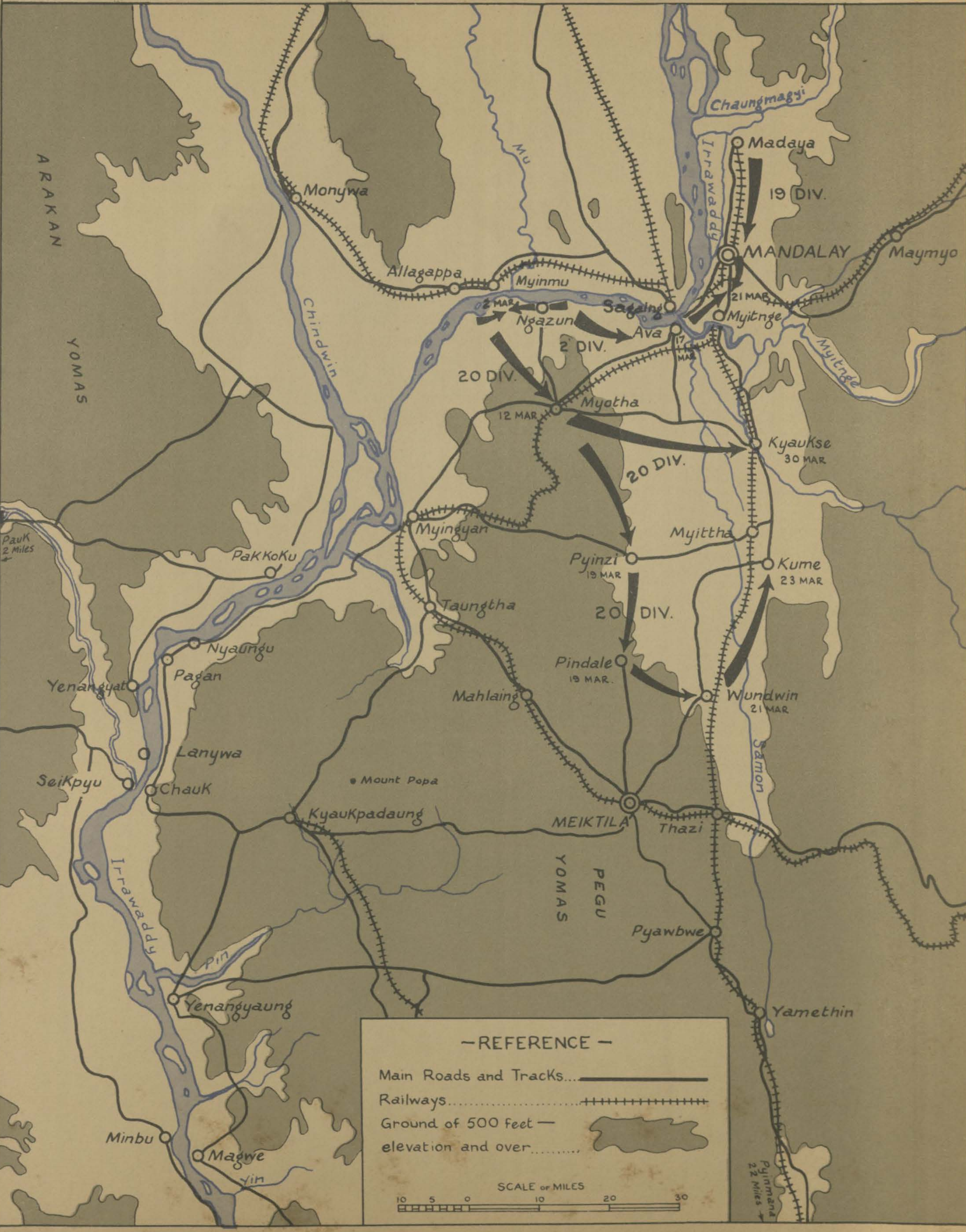
# MAP 30. OWN AND ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

20 MARCH 1945

## CAPTURE OF MANDALAY



# MAP 31. THE BATTLE OF MANDALAY PLAIN



# SYNOPSIS

## B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

### SECTION SEVEN: MARCH AND APRIL 1945

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Mandalay captured; Clearance of the Mandalay Plain begun; Japanese counter-attacks at Meiktila driven off; Myingyan captured, and the Taungtha area cleared; Lieut.-General Kimura orders a general withdrawal; Sustained rates exceeded.

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Distribution of arms to the Burma Defence Army; Officers of Force 136 informed that armed rising against the Japanese is contemplated; Internal security aspects of supporting Resistance movement; Political decisions to remain my responsibility; Armed rising of the B.D.A. discovered to be imminent; Maximum support ordered; Chiefs of Staff informed of my decision, and their approval requested; Approval to support the rising received; Burma Defence Army rises against the Japanese on the 28th March.

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Army/Air plan, for the overland thrust to Rangoon, now behind schedule; a modified DRACULA is called for; An emergency amphibious assault ordered, with D-Day not later than the 5th May; Operation ROGER thereby delayed; Detailed planning for DRACULA begins, and is given over-riding priority; Forces for DRACULA withdrawn from Arakan; Liberation of Arakan completed by 82 West African Division.

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Improvement in the land lines of communication; Air-supply still essential for Fourteenth Army's advance; Air and Ground Supply Committee set up to recommend further improvements; 221 Group close-support squadrons organised on a highly mobile basis; Operational squadrons extensively re-grouped; Fourteenth Army re-groups for the final thrust; Main thrust, down Mandalay–Rangoon railway axis, allotted to 4 Corps; Thrust down the line of the Irrawaddy allotted to 33 Corps; 33 Corps captures the Yenangyaung oilfields area, and the key town of Prome; 4 Corps makes rapid advance down the railway axis; Pyinmana and Toungoo group of airfields secured; Lieut.-General Kimura moves to Moulmein, and orders evacuation of Rangoon; Japanese forces re-grouped to hold Pegu; 4 Corps captures Pegu, but is checked by pre-monsoon rains.

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DRACULA beats the monsoon by a few hours; Rangoon found to be clear of Japanese.

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THE gradual slowing-down of operations in N.C.A.C., which had preceded the halting of the Chinese divisions on the Lashio–Hsipaw line, had allowed the Japanese to disengage the majority of their units from that sector and throw them against the Fourteenth Army which was about to launch the main assault on Mandalay. 19 Indian Division, which had linked its bridgeheads at Thabeikkyin and Kyaukmyaung, had broken out, and by the last week in February had been ready for the thrust southward. On the 26th, the division attacked, and pushed forward relentlessly in a series of leap-frogging movements by its three brigades. 15 and 33 Japanese Divisions were completely confused and demoralised by the speed of the advance, which was supported by Mosquitos, Hurricanes and Beaufighters. In the first week, enemy strong-points were either assaulted or by-passed; and by the 5th March a bridgehead had been established over the Chaungmagyi, the last natural barrier before Mandalay.

469. 19 Indian Division pushed on, capturing the enemy's carefully prepared positions about Madaya, on the south bank of the chaung, before the Japanese themselves had time to fall back on them; and on the 9th March our troops entered Mandalay City. Siege was immediately laid to Mandalay Hill and Fort Dufferin: the two strong-points of the city, in which the enemy had concentrated nearly all the defending troops. Mandalay Hill is a great rock, covered with pagodas and temples, which rises to nearly 780 feet above the surrounding paddy-fields and completely dominates the north-east sector of the city; Fort Dufferin, which lies to the south-west of this hill, and two miles from the river, is encircled by a moat 230 feet wide and has walls 20 feet high backed by an earth embankment which is some 70 feet thick at its base.

470. Mandalay Hill was captured on the evening of the 11th March, after twenty-four hours of severe hand-to-hand fighting in which the enemy was only finally destroyed by lighted petrol drums which were rolled down into the tunnels where he was holding out. After three more days of street fighting, the city area was cleared by the 14th March, and Fort Dufferin, which was strongly held, was invested by our troops. On the 16th, Hurricanes and Thunderbolts (P-47), carrying 500-lb. bombs, made three attacks on the walls of the Fort; one of these strikes damaged the north wall, but did not breach it; even medium artillery fire at 500 yards range failed to break through the massive walls and their earth embankments. After a further air strike by Thunderbolts had made a breach in the wall, infantry tried the following night to cross the moat and scale the breach, but were driven back by heavy enemy fire. Three more unsuccessful attempts were made on the 18th, our troops having to withdraw on each occasion.

471. On the 19th, yet another attempt was made to cross the moat; but this was also unsuccessful, because of weeds. Later that day, three Mitchells (B-25), carrying 2,000-lb bombs, made an experimental attack on the wall, using skip-bombing technique[1]—and succeeded in blowing a 15-foot hole. When, on the morning of the 20th, two squadrons of Thunderbolts successfully attacked the north wall and our troops entered the Fort, it was found that the enemy had decided to abandon it and had moved out under cover of darkness. The Japanese had left behind a large quantity of equipment and stores; and a large number of civilian internees. In the next few days, many parties of escaping Japanese were intercepted and mopped-up, only a few of these eventually finding their way out of the area; and on the 21st March, Mandalay was declared clear of the enemy though after I had visited Fort Dufferin on the 22nd, Japanese stragglers were still being found inside the fort.[2]

472. During the assault and capture of Mandalay itself, the enemy's resistance to the west and south-west of the town had also been crumbling. 20 Indian Division had broken out of their bridgeheads opposite Allagappa and Myinmu, and had passed to the offensive: having already on the 2nd March made contact with 2 British Division, which was fighting towards them from Ngazun.[3] 20 Indian Division had advanced rapidly over the country to the south and south-west of their bridgeheads, mopping-up Japanese remnants and playing havoc with their lines of communication. Elements of the division captured Myotha on the 12th March: thereby securing an important road and rail centre which controls all

[1] The bomb, aimed to strike the water of the moat from a low level, skipped forward to explode against the wall.

[2] The capture of Mandalay was a fitting climax to the advance of 19 Indian Division, who had killed 6,000 Japanese between the 9th January and the 21st March.

[3] See Maps 30 and 31 (between pages 136 and 137); and "B" paragraph 439.

traffic between Mandalay and Myingyan. Next, a mechanised armoured brigade group moved southward with great speed, capturing Pyinzi and Pindale in quick succession, and taking Wundwin on the 21st March, where large enemy dumps were found.

473. Here, the division turned north: surprising and destroying a large force of Japanese at Kume on the 23rd, and cutting the main escape route from Mandalay. In the meantime, its remaining two brigades were operating south of Mandalay, aiming at the capture of Kyaukse, which would cut the main road and railway from Mandalay to Thazi and Rangoon at yet another point. Kyaukse fell on the 30th March, after a week's severe fighting; and its loss was a severe blow to Lieut.-General Kimura, who had hoped that this town would provide the bastion behind which the Japanese forces, which were now streaming back in confusion from the north and the west, could be re-formed. Since their crossing of the Irrawaddy on the 12th February, 20 Indian Division had fought magnificently in the fierce attack that the enemy had made against the bridgeheads; and after a long period of defensive fighting, the division had turned to a swiftly-moving offensive, which not only liquidated the enemy units immediately opposing them, but had disorganised the whole area south of Mandalay.[1]

474. 2 British Division had advanced more slowly; but it had captured Ava Fort on the 17th March, and opened the Ava–Mandalay road (where it had made contact with 19 Indian Division) on the 21st. The division was then diverted south-westward and ordered to clear the triangle Myitnge–Myingyan–Meiktila; and linked up at the end of the month with 268 Indian Infantry Brigade, which was engaged in liquidating parties of the enemy which still held out in the Sagaing Hills. By the end of March, the battle of annihilation in the Mandalay Plain was in its closing stages; and 33 Corps had driven the remnants of three enemy divisions eastward into the hills. The Corps had been operating in S.E.A.C. since the 3rd April, 1944, when its Headquarters had first opened at Jorhat. After a year's fighting, which had been marked by an unbroken line of successes, the formations under Lieut.-General Stopford's command had made advances varying from 550 to 650 miles; cleared the Japanese from an area of 35,000 square miles; and liberated more than 11,000 towns, villages, and hamlets—including the great city of Mandalay.[2]

475. On the 4 Corps front, in the Meiktila area, the enemy had in the meantime launched a series of desperate attacks throughout March, in an attempt to recapture the town. Lieut.-General Kimura, realising how strained our lines of communication were, had ordered a strong force to recapture Taungtha, and the hills which dominate the town to the north-east. This operation was successful, and Meiktila was cut off from the Nyaungu bridgehead until the end of the month, when Taungtha was recaptured: as a result, nearly 1,000 "thin-skinned" vehicles (which constituted the administrative "tail" of 17 Indian Division) were unable to get through. For a time, our position at Meiktila had been by no means easy; for the virtual collapse of operations in N.C.A.C. had allowed Lieut.-General Kimura to assemble a force equivalent to six brigades, with artillery and tanks, in the area. Against this formidable concentration, 4 Corps was able to muster only 17 Indian Division and 255 Indian Tank Brigade—while the only reinforcement available from Army reserve was 5 Indian Division, which at the beginning of March had been 700 miles away at Jorhat.

476. At Meiktila, when it was cut off, the fighting had been very severe: the Japanese throwing in one attack upon another. But our troops never lost the initiative. A small force consisting mainly of the R.A.F. Regiment was made responsible for Meiktila Main airfield; a force of approximately brigade strength was given the task of holding the static defences of the town; while the rest of the defending troops were almost continuously on the offensive. Having cut our land line of communication, the enemy now exerted every effort to capture the airfield, on which airborne supplies were being landed, by bringing up his guns to within point-blank range of the strip. For a time, our supply transports were no longer able to land and supplies had to be dropped by air.

477. The enemy's intention to fight it out around Meiktila suited our plans well; for the superior fighting quality of our troops, the superior mobility of our armoured and mechanised columns in the open country around the town, and our overwhelming superiority in the air, more than compensated for our great inferiority in numbers. The enemy gradually wore himself down, and in the last analysis our eventual advance was greatly assisted by his not having withdrawn earlier; nevertheless the battle around Meiktila was long and fierce, and there were some bad moments. There had not originally been sufficient troops to provide complete protection for the airfield

[1] Between the 12th February and the 30th March, 20 Indian Division had killed more than 3,000 Japanese, counted on the ground, and had captured 50 guns.

[2] In these operations 33 Corps had killed 19,547 (counted), taken 720 prisoners, and captured or destroyed 252 guns.

and allow it to be included within the main defended area; but the enemy's superiority in numbers had to a certain extent been off-set by the fly-in from Palel, halfway through March, of the air-transportable brigade of 5 Indian Division[1], in addition to that of 17 Indian Division, which had been flown in nearly three weeks earlier. On several occasions, consequently, the enemy had succeeded in penetrating to the airfield itself—indeed, part of the second air-transportable brigade had had to land under direct fire. But owing to the skill and courage of the aircrews, and above all to the effective air cover provided by 221 Group, very few transport aircraft and troops were lost during these landing operations.

478. Fierce fighting continued until the end of the month in all sectors of the Meiktila area, particularly around the airfield; but on the night of the 28th March the enemy, pounded from the air and hammered on the ground, gave up the unequal struggle and fell back before our infantry, artillery and aircraft. A week later, 4 Corps Headquarters opened at Meiktila. Throughout this period, 7 Indian Division had been operating on both banks of the Irrawaddy, on the western flank of 4 Corps. On the west bank, the division occupied Lanywa at the end of March: the first of the oilfields we recaptured. On the east bank, steady progress was made southward and eastward; and the division was assisted by one of the mechanised brigades of 5 Indian Division. (Early in March, when its air-transportable brigade had been flown in to Meiktila, the two mechanised brigades of 5 Indian Division had begun their overland move from Jorhat to the battle-front: reaching the Nyaungu bridgehead by the middle of the month, and being concentrated shortly afterwards between Pakokku and Taungtha. One brigade had then been flown to Mandalay, where it had taken over from 19 Indian Division the control of operations in Mandalay–Maymyo–Myittha–Ava area; while the other had been ordered to assist 7 Indian Division).

479. While one mechanised brigade of 5 Indian Division was assaulting the main hill position to the north of Taungtha, 7 Indian Division captured the vital river port and rail terminus of Myingyan, at the junction of the Chindwin and the Irrawaddy, on the 23rd March; and Taungtha was captured a few days later. The Taungtha area was quickly cleared, and the mechanised brigade of 5 Indian Division moved forward down the road to Meiktila, from which the enemy had just finally retired. The capture of Myingyan, which was not only a river port and railway terminus but was also the centre of five airfields, was of the utmost importance to the administrative staffs and services of A.L.F.S.E.A., Fourteenth Army, and its formations. Fourteenth Army engineers had set up ship-building yards at Kalewa[2], and by now about 400 river-craft of varying types had been built; while about 170 enemy craft of various types, including small river steamers, had been salvaged and put into commission, and other power-craft had been brought by air in parts and assembled on the river bank. The yards had also constructed about 540 assault boats—10-ton blunt-ended pontoons—which, lashed together in threes and given deck-planking, could carry about 30 tons.

480. Although our supply situation and our lines of communication were a recurring problem, to the solution of which the capture of Myingyan would add its quota, our troubles were light when compared with those of the Japanese—who were hampered, more than by anything else at this time, by the almost complete breakdown of their main communications and supply system. The patient work of the Strategic Air Force and of the long-range tactical squadrons, which had been persistently and unobtrusively carried out over the past year, was now beginning to yield rich dividends. Lieut.-General Kimura, having held on too long (as the Japanese were prone to do), had come to the conclusion at the end of March that what he called "The decisive battle of the Irrawaddy shore" had been fought to our advantage rather than to his—and that he now had no alternative but to order a general withdrawal.

481. Lieut.-General Honda, commanding the Thirty-third Japanese Army, was ordered to hold our advance down the line of the Mandalay–Rangoon railway, and to allow Lieut.-General Katamura to withdraw the Fifteenth Japanese Army through his lines, southward to the Toungoo–Pegu area. Lieut.-General Sakurai, commanding the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army, was ordered to take up positions in the Irrawaddy Valley around Yenangyaung; to hold the Fourteenth Army there; and to keep the remaining elements of 15 Corps at bay in Arakan. The enemy had little time to spare for digging-in, and was greatly handicapped by the destruction or capture of almost all his guns as well as a great quantity of vehicles.

482. The Fifteenth Japanese Army was now rapidly disintegrating under the blows of 33 Corps; and its formations and units were either retreating down the Mandalay–Thazi road or struggling into the foothills

[1] 5 Indian Division had now been re-organised, like 17 Indian Division (See 'B', paragraph 388 and its footnote), on a two-mechanised/one-air-transportable brigade basis.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 300.

to the east, where they hoped to escape along jungle tracks. The chaos which prevailed can be judged from the fact that Lieut.-General Katamura's operational order of the 6th April—covering the general withdrawal—gave the formations orders which were either impracticable, or else so vague as to be meaningless: one of them, for instance, receiving the simple directions that they must " cope with any change in the situation". The Thirty-third and Twenty-eighth Japanese Armies, although they too had suffered severe casualties and lost many guns, were in better shape; and it seemed that if they managed to reorganise quickly, they might be capable of building up an efficient defence of the railway and river axes.

483. Lieut.-General Kimura's command arrangements, even if they had not already broken down, as had been the case with the Fifteenth Japanese Army, were in a very precarious condition. In order to hasten the process of disintegration, we now paid special attention to the ferreting-out and bombing of enemy formation headquarters; and the new Headquarters of the Fifteenth and Thirty-third Japanese Armies were located early in April: at Pyinmana and Pyawbwe, respectively. It seemed that our eastern flank was not going to be threatened from the Loilem area as we had feared; all the same, in view of the advantage of continuing pressure in this area, I asked the Generalissimo if he would allow a Chinese force to press southward as far as Loilem, to assist the Fourteenth Army by distracting the enemy—and if possible, by cutting his escape route into Siam. But Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart informed me that the Generalissimo refused to allow the Chinese divisions to go beyond Lashio and Hsipaw.

484. It was now clear that the Japanese Army was proving itself quite unable to cope with our new technique of using motorised infantry and armour over country suitable to fast-moving tactics. The jungle and mountains which in the early stages had given the enemy a high degree of immunity from tanks and aircraft would no longer be protecting him; and now that he had been forced into the open he had no effective defence against our armoured and air attacks. In contrast to the misgivings with which the Japanese armies must have faced the coming battles, the fighting spirit of the Fourteenth Army and our Air Forces had never been higher.

485. But it was estimated that the temporary diversion of transport squadrons to China, in December, had involved a delay of two or three weeks in Lieut.-General Slim's operations; and if the Fourteenth Army was to reach Rangoon before the monsoon set in, it would have to maintain an average advance of ten miles a day in its final thrust. At the conference in Calcutta on the 23rd February, the monthly air-lift that Fourteenth Army and 15 Corps would require had been assessed at more than 57,500 tons.[1] The transport aircraft crews had already been working for several weeks at considerably more than sustained rates: in fact, these had almost been doubled, the British flying 196 hours a month instead of 100, and the Americans 204 hours instead of 120. Similarly, the squadrons of 221 Group had been exceeding the maximum permissible sustained rates for the past six months. Much credit is due to the Maintenance Group in India, which very seldom kept them waiting for replacement aircraft when those over-flown were sent back for maintenance.

486. These sustained rates had been carefully computed, as a result of long experience in both air forces, and were only to be surpassed for a few days at a time, to meet a grave emergency. When it is considered that this surprising increase was kept up for weeks on end, the question arises, whether the sustained rate figure is too low. I do not believe this to be the case; and I consider that it would be a mistake to take the ability of the squadrons in South-East Asia to exceed these rates for so long, as a precedent; and to plan an operation on the assumption that this could easily be repeated. I am certain that the only reason it was possible in this instance without a complete crack-up, was that very special conditions applied. For it was known that we had embarked on a gamble; and that if the gamble did not come off, we would not only fail to reach Rangoon but would probably have to withdraw again. But everyone concerned was convinced that the gamble would succeed if each put his last ounce into this all-out effort—and every one of them did.

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On the 18th February, the Commander of Force 136[2] had requested that I should review an order by Lieut.-General Leese forbidding any further distribution of arms to the Burma Defence Army (B.D.A.), which was the military component of the "Anti-Fascist Organisation" (A.F.O.), the main Resistance

[1] In the event, this figure was exceeded by nearly 20,000 tons per month—but even so it was only possible to maintain five divisions and the armoured force in the final dash to Rangoon.
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movement in Burma. The A.F.O. was a loosely co-ordinated "popular front" of the active Resistance parties, mainly of the Left; which included the Burmese Communist Party (though this was later expelled). Many of its members had engaged in active, and even illegal, opposition to the Government of Burma before the war; and some had collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation. The B.D.A., originally raised and equipped by the Japanese in the invasion of 1942 as the "Burma Independence" Army, had been led by 30 young Burmans who had received military training from the Japanese in Siam and Hainan. After the British withdrawal it had been disbanded owing to the indiscipline of its members; but in August, 1942, elements of it had been re-organised, again by the Japanese, under its new name. An officers' training school had been set up, with 300 cadet officers, of whom the 30 best graduates had subsequently been sent to Japan in June, 1943, for further training at the Military Academy. The B.D.A. had been used for maintaining internal security, and had been debarred from all political activities.

488. The leaders of the A.F.O. had contacted an officer of Force 136 as early as December, 1943—though this had not been known at the time, because the officer had had no wireless link with the world outside Burma. A year later the leaders of the A.F.O. had again approached officers of Force 136, this time to inform them that an armed rising of the B.D.A. against the Japanese was contemplated. Although well equipped with a considerable quantity of modern arms which they had either picked up on the battlefields after the fighting of 1942, or else received from the Japanese, the B.D.A. were not sufficiently well armed to undertake military operations against fully-equipped regular troops; and, in view of their professed intention to take part in the campaign on our side, at the appropriate moment, Force 136 had since then been supplying them with additional arms.

489. Major-General C. F. B. Pearce,[1] Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Burma), had advised Lieut.-General Leese that the further issue of arms to the B.D.A. would imperil the present and future security of Burma; and Lieut.-General Leese, who did not at this time consider that a rising of the B.D.A. would be operationally valuable to us, had therefore ordered that no more arms were to be issued. The Commander of Force 136, argued, however, that a strengthened guerrilla movement in Burma would greatly assist his own operations behind the enemy lines. He linked the question, also, with that of supporting the main Resistance movement in Malaya—the "Anti-Japanese Union and Forces" (A.J.U.F.), which was also predominantly Left-wing—claiming that it would not be justifiable to continue providing arms and other material assistance to the A.J.U.F. if it was likely that similar political considerations would restrict its activities also, when Malaya in its turn became a battle-field.

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491. The operational necessity to support the indigenous Resistance movement was clear. On the 24th February, therefore, I reviewed Lieut.-General Leese's decision and directed that the issue of arms by Force 136 should continue. I gave orders, however, that arms were not to be distributed to the A.F.O. as an organisation; but that only such limited numbers of individual members should be armed, as were required for our approved Intelligence and para-military operations. On the 5th March, I issued a directive outlining my policy with regard to bringing guerrillas, of whatever nature, into active participation in our operations. I laid down that, in its military aspects, the decision, whether or not to do this, would rest with the responsible commander on the spot, who must however keep me fully informed; and that, where there was a difference of opinion between two or more commanders, the matter was to be referred to me. In making this military decision commanders were to be guided by whatever directions I might have issued on the political aspect.

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491. The operational necessity to support the indigenous Resistance movement was clear. On the 24th February, therefore, I reviewed Lieut.-General Leese's decision and directed that the issue of arms by Force 136 should continue. I gave orders, however, that arms were not to be distributed to the A.F.O. as an organisation; but that only such limited numbers of individual members should be armed, as were required for our approved Intelligence and para-military operations. On the 5th March, I issued a directive outlining my policy with regard to bringing guerrillas, of whatever nature, into active participation in our operations. I laid down that, in its military aspects, the decision, whether or not to do this, would rest with the responsible commander on the spot, who must however keep me fully informed; and that, where there was a difference of opinion between two or more commanders, the matter was to be referred to me. In making this military decision commanders were to be guided by whatever directions I might have issued on the political aspect.

492. In its political aspects, the matter would be one for decision by me; and commanders in the field, or their advisers, were to present any views they

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might hold on the subject in detail for my consideration. When a decision to call a guerrilla band or sabotage party into active participation had been taken, it would be the responsibility of the British liaison unit concerned to supervise the arming, and to take subsequent command and control, of the band—subject to operational direction from the commander in the field. The unit responsible for the arming would also be made responsible for the subsequent disarming, when the guerrillas had completed their task—and experience on a limited scale with A.F.O. representatives in Arakan had already shown that it was practicable to call in such arms when the operations were concluded.

493. Soon after this it became known, through officers of Force 136, that units of the B.D.A. would leave Rangoon for the front on the 16th March: but that this was a cover-plan, to enable them to take up their positions before showing their hands. Their departure took place, as announced, with a great send-off from the Japanese; and on the 25th, Lieut.-General Leese informed me that the rebellion was imminent, and that the B.D.A. had at their disposal at least 5,000 armed men, most of whom were in the Pyinmana, Toungoo and Prome areas. He said he considered that the rising could assist his operations, and that now was the psychological moment for such action, adding that Lieut.-General Slim welcomed this development and urged that the rebellion should be given the maximum support by Force 136. At the same time he warned me that the Civil Affairs officers at his Headquarters were still of the opinion that the arming of the guerrillas and the support of this rebellion would seriously increase internal security problems in Burma.

494. It seemed clear that the rising would take place before the end of the month, whether we supported it or not; and Lieut.-General Leese requested that, if it was to be supported, a decision to that effect might be made immediately. After careful consideration I ordered that the rising should be given maximum support, and authorised Lieut.-General Leese to arm—in accordance with the terms of my directive of the 5th March—as many guerrillas as he considered necessary. I urged that every effort must be made, even at this late hour, to control and co-ordinate the rising through British liaison officers; and I left Lieut.-General Leese a free hand to decide in detail how to ensure that it was not made prematurely, and to synchronise its phases with our overall plans for the drive to Rangoon. It seemed unlikely that the B.D.A. (though an establishment of between 7,000 and 10,000 men was claimed for it) would be able to inflict serious losses on the Japanese. The value of the rising would be psychological rather than military, for not only would this action prove a great surprise and embarrassment to the Japanese but it would provide a stimulus to pro-British sentiment in Burma by providing the local population with a stake in the actual fighting.

495. On the 27th March I informed the British Chiefs of Staff of the whole position: telling them what action I had taken, and the considerations which had governed my decision. In asking for permission to support the rising, I pointed out that the movement, which was backed by a Left-wing nationalist group, the Anti-Fascist Organisation, was spontaneous and widespread; and that the rising itself would probably be led by Major-General Aung San, Commander of the Burmese Army which had been raised under the Japanese occupation. While the assistance we might expect from such a rising was not part of my plans, it would undoubtedly provide an acceptable bonus; and since the areas affected would be in the south, it might help to hasten the capture of Rangoon. But above all, I considered that it was operationally essential to avoid finding ourselves in a position where we were obliged to commit any of our troops to suppressing the movement by force.

496. I made it clear that I fully realised the political implications of supporting this rising; and that, since the A.F.O. were known to have been guilty of treason in the past by collaborating with the Japanese, I had issued a directive to Force 136 officers, to which they must strictly adhere in their dealings with the A.F.O. The leaders were to be informed that their assistance was appreciated, but that their past offences were not forgotten; that no general amnesty would be given, and that offenders might consequently be required to stand trial in due course—though any service to the Allied cause would be taken into account. They were to be further informed that their movement would be expected to disarm voluntarily when instructed, though opportunity would be offered for suitable volunteers to be enrolled in the regular Burma armed forces; and that members of the movement would be enabled, and expected, to take part in the civil reconstruction of their country.

497. The Chiefs of Staff immediately referred the matter to the War Cabinet, who telegraphed me their approval on the 30th. On the military side, the Chiefs of Staff instructed me that the rising should be supported, subject to the proviso that I make no additional demands for transport aircraft, and that no additional air support be given to the movement other than what I might wish to provide out of my

own resources. On the political side, the War Cabinet approved the above points in my directive, stressing that it should be made abundantly clear to the A.F.O. leaders that we did not attach any great importance to their contribution; and that they should be reminded that they had a lot of leeway to make up as collaborators with the Japanese. If Major-General Aung San, or other leaders of the movement, should ask our intentions for the future government of Burma, or our future policy, it should be made clear that we were not prepared to discuss political issues with them, or with any isolated section of the community.

498. The War Cabinet instructed me to publicise, by means of my Psychological Warfare Division, the fact that we considered the British and Indian forces, assisted by the Americans and the Chinese, to be the true liberators of Burma; to stress that the policy of His Majesty's Government for Burmese political development within the British Commonwealth had already been stated; and finally, that unity and discipline within the country, under British leadership, were essential for the immediate task of completing the liberation of Burma and for the next task of restoring the well-being of its people. On the 28th March, the B.D.A.—re-named the "Burma National Army", to symbolise the break-away from the Japanese—rose in armed revolt against the Japanese in many parts of Central and Southern Burma.[1]

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At the Monywa meeting on the 22nd March,[2] Lieut.-General Leese had pointed out that the Army/Air plan in Burma was behind schedule, and that he was beginning to doubt the ability of Fourteenth Army to reach Rangoon before the monsoon. On the 26th March, he had telegraphed recommending that an immediate study should be made of an early amphibious operation against Rangoon (a modified DRACULA), using part of the forces which had been allotted to ROGER (while planning for ROGER continued). Lieut-General Leese said that in making this proposal he was taking into consideration the recently-expressed views of the Chiefs of Staff that ROGER should not be launched until it was clear beyond all doubt that the fall of Rangoon was imminent.

500. I had at no stage been entirely confident that Rangoon could be captured purely by an overland advance before the 1945 monsoon; but the decision not to mount an amphibious operation had been taken on the 23rd February. Now that a modified DRACULA was asked for, more than a month after the last satisfactory date for mounting it, heroic measures would have to be taken, which required discussion with the other Commanders-in-Chief. At a special meeting which I held with the three Commanders-in-Chief on the 2nd April at Kandy, Admiral Power reminded Lieut.-General Leese that he had always stressed the difficulties (from the naval point of view) of DRACULA at so late a date, and had warned Lieut.-General Leese that after the first week in May an amphibious landing would be extremely hazardous. Lieut.-General Leese and Air Chief Marshal Park agreed that the necessary military and air forces could be mounted in time, provided that exceptional efforts were made and that no unforeseen obstacles arose.

501. Admiral Power was willing to accept the naval risks now involved, however; so I decided that an emergency amphibious assault by one division, supported by armour and a composite battalion of airborne troops, should be mounted with a D-Day not later than the 5th May; and that preparations should be made for another division to follow-up if necessary. I was anxious to avoid using this second division, for this would increase the delay already caused to the time-table for ZIPPER and MAILFIST. ROGER would now have to be delayed by more than six weeks in any case; and if a second division had to be used against Rangoon it would have to be postponed still further—while the development of the port of Rangoon itself and the flow of supplies through it to our forces in Southern Burma would also be slowed down.

502. I decided that detailed planning was to begin immediately at Akyab and that the operation was to be mounted from Akyab and Kyaukpyu. There would be a shortage of certain types of equipment, which could have been made available if we had had more time to plan. Moreover, the proper distribution

[1] The B.N.A. killed some 700 Japanese, including a Divisional Commander and another General; and by attacking isolated garrisons and lines of communication, and maintaining pressure on the Japanese Burma Area Army, it tied down a large number of enemy troops which could otherwise have been used to block the Fourteenth Army in their drive on Rangoon.

[2] Held when 4 Corps was still being fiercely opposed around Meiktila and around the Yenangyaung oilfields, where the enemy had concentrated in the hope of delaying our advance down the Irrawaddy Valley. (See 'B', paragraph 461.)

of our transport aircraft now presented a most difficult problem, because we had to find additional aircraft at this late stage for training during the month that remained to us, and for carrying the airborne troops in the operation itself. Lieut.-General Leese was most unwilling to release any from the Burma land operations and asked me to try to obtain extra transport aircraft from outside the theatre. Immediately after this conference, therefore, I signalled the Chiefs of Staff, asking if they could provide by mid-April two squadrons of transport aircraft trained in parachute-dropping operations—which was the minimum required for the airborne part of DRACULA. They replied that this was impossible; but that untrained crews could be provided early in May (which would have been too late for the operation).

503. During the first week of April, Lieut.-General Leese asked that DRACULA should be made in sufficient strength to ensure that it could take Rangoon unaided, if the overland thrust was held up. At the same time, since the success and speed of Lieut.-General Slim's advance would depend on large-scale, continuous air-supply to the forward troops, Lieut.-General Leese again insisted that no transport aircraft could be spared from the overland thrust.

504. We knew that Elephant Point—covering the entrance to the Rangoon River—was strongly defended by coastal guns and dual-purpose anti-aircraft guns. If these defences were not neutralised, they would be able to prevent all mine-sweeping and convoy operations in the river; and since the mines laid by our own aircraft would have to be swept as well as the Japanese mines, it was estimated that at least four days would be required for completing the sweeping operations which would allow the larger ships to enter the river. Not only the river itself was mined, but also the shallow approaches to it; and this meant that the Landing-Ships, Infantry, (L.S.I.), would have to stop a considerable distance off-shore to lower their Landing-Craft, Assault and Mechanised (L.C.A. and L.C.M.)—which would then have to cover a considerable distance in the open sea, probably under bad weather conditions.

505. Since the shallow waters would make it impossible for large ships to operate within bombardment range in the early stages of the operation, bombers and fighter-bombers would have to be relied on for the main weight of the bombardment. But Air Chief Marshal Park stated that it was very doubtful if bombing alone could neutralise the defences; it would therefore be essential to drop troops to destroy them, if the seaborne landings were to be successful. Since no transport aircraft were available from outside the theatre, however, some would have to be taken from the overland thrust, or else the operation would have to be cancelled—which no one, least of all Lieut.-General Leese, wished to see happen. But since he considered that one parachute battalion would be sufficient, it would only be necessary to transfer two transport squadrons to fly them in; and I therefore ordered that these were to be withdrawn for this purpose.

506. It was going to be essential that DRACULA should be given close air support; and I therefore ordered Lieut.-General Leese to ensure that the Fourteenth Army captured suitable airfields in Southern Burma from which this could be done.[1] I stressed that every risk should be taken, including that of very heavy casualties—for there would be a risk of even greater casualties to the DRACULA force, if it received inadequate air-support. It was fully realised that the amphibious operation would be a difficult one, particularly since there was little time left for planning and mounting the assault. DRACULA being an inter-service operation, would require a great deal of detailed and co-ordinated staff work. It would be necessary, for instance, to examine cyclonic conditions in the Bay of Bengal which might affect the passage of the convoys—the journey by sea from Akyab being about 480 miles, and from Kyaukpyu about 430.

507. Planning on general lines was already in progress at H.Q. S.A.C.S.E.A.; it remained for the Force Commanders (Rear-Admiral Martin, Lieut.-General Christison, and Air Vice-Marshal Bandon) to work out the details. By the 9th April, they had agreed on a provisional plan: which I considered on the 16th April at Advanced H.Q. S.A.C.S.E.A. at Calcutta, and to which I gave my general approval. On the 17th, I issued a written directive to the Commanders-in-Chief; ordering them "to carry out an amphibious and airborne operation with the object of the early capture of Rangoon, should this not have been previously achieved by the Fourteenth Army from the north", and laying down that only the Naval Force Commander was empowered to postpone D-Day. Finally, I laid down that DRACULA and its supporting operations were to be given over-riding priority: however seriously this might upset the time-table for ZIPPER and MAILFIST.

[1] Pyinmana and the Toungoo group of airfields were selected.

508. Meanwhile, at the beginning of April, Lieut.-General Christison had begun to prepare 26 Indian Division, on Ramree Island, for DRACULA. The division had carried out, on 13th March, the last amphibious operation in Arakan—against Letpan (36 miles south of Ru-ywa), with the object of cutting the coastal road from Ru-ywa to Taungup. Since it had been decided that 15 Corps was henceforward to be supplied entirely by sea, a forward maintenance area on the mainland at Tamandu was considered necessary, for supporting such land operations as would still be possible. 25 Indian Division had captured the village of Tamandu and had begun to secure the Tamandu area; but in order to ease the strain on maintenance still further, Lieut.-General Christison decided to withdraw the division to Akyab—leaving one brigade at Tamandu, however, until the forward maintenance area was firmly established.

509. Force 64 had been withdrawn, except for a few landing-craft in which 25 Indian Division were to be lifted to Akyab; and by the end of March the Arakan operations were virtually at an end. By the middle of April 33 Corps was approaching Minbu (the eastern terminus of the road through the An Pass). Lieut.-General Leese, in conformity with the views I had been expressing to him, directed Lieut.-General Christison to make every effort to prevent the enemy in the An area from withdrawing across the mountains and joining the main body of Twenty-eighth Japanese Army in the Irrawaddy Valley. At the same time, as much pressure as possible was to be exerted along the Taungup–Prome road, so as to keep the enemy in this area facing westward and delay his withdrawal to Prome. (Our project for the repair and development of this road had been abandoned; for air photographs and the reports of Japanese prisoners had made it clear that, unless engineer resources were diverted from more essential work, the scheme could not be put through before the monsoon stopped all movement in the Taungup area.)

510. 82 West African Division, which had broken contact with the enemy some time before, and had concentrated on the An–Tamandu road, was ordered to send a brigade up the An–Minbu road to contain the Japanese in this area: while the brigade which had been securing the base at Tamandu moved southward and occupied Taungup on the 28th April.[1] The division continued to press up the Taungup–Prome road, in order to maintain contact with the withdrawing enemy forces and keep them facing westward; at the same time, it pushed southward from Taungup and entered Sandoway on the 9th May. When it entered Gwa on the 13th, the liberation of Arakan was complete.[2]

511. The Arakan campaign had been a remarkable example of combined operations. There had been no precedent to guide the Force Commanders; the naval forces had been faced with quite special difficulties, for the chaungs were mostly un-charted and un-navigated, and there had seldom been enough time for a proper reconnaissance to be made before the operations. Sloops, destroyers, minesweepers, motor-launches and landing-craft carried out tasks which they had never before undertaken; and since there were never enough minor landing-craft available, these had operated ceaselessly, far from bases or a depot ship.

512. In the amphibious operations carried out between the 4th January and the 13th March, 23,000 rounds of calibres varying from 4-inch to 15-inch were fired by H.M. ships in bombardment support of the land forces—mainly by sloops, which undertook almost all in-shore support—while in the Myebon, Kangaw, and Ru-ywa operations alone, approximately 54,000 men, 1,000 vehicles, 14,000 tons of stores, and 800 animals were carried. During the whole of the Arakan operations, from the 1st September to the end of the campaign, 15 Corps killed and counted 3,950 Japanese and took 129 prisoners, while suffering 5,093 casualties, of which only 1,155 were killed. In the same period, 224 Group destroyed 63 enemy aircraft, probably destroyed 9, and damaged 58: their own losses by enemy action being 78 aircraft. A strategical by-product of having continued to operate in Arakan (after capturing the air-bases from which the Fourteenth Army was to be supplied), in order to clear it, so that we could withdraw our troops for use elsewhere, was that 55 Japanese Division was kept engaged there until it was too late for it to move into Central Burma to oppose the overland thrust on Rangoon.

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By the beginning of March, the 4-inch pipe-line from Dimapur had been completed as far as

[1] Patrols of 26 Indian Division had entered Taungup some time before, and found it deserted.

[2] All land forces in Arakan had now passed directly under H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A. from the command of H.Q. 15 Corps, which had since the beginning of April been preparing for Operation DRACULA.

Imphal, and storage tanks had been built to receive both motor and aviation spirit at the rate of three-and-a-half million gallons a month. This pipe-line, which was being extended to Tamu, took a great load off the Dimapur–Imphal sector of the Road. The railway line from Myingyan to Meiktila was also being put into working order: many locomotives (together with a great quantity of railway stores) had been brought by land and air from India; six 5-ton locomotives had been brought in sections by special U.S. aircraft to Myingyan and reassembled there; three MacArthur locomotives, weighing about 70 tons each, had been brought in by road on special trailers; six 21-ton steam locomotives had been transported complete to Meiktila; while more than 2,500 tons of heavy railway stores were brought by road, water, and air.

514. Although the result of all this effort was that an efficient line of communication from Dimapur to Meiktila would be ready by the end of April to bridge the gap which air-supply could not fill, it would all the same be necessary to use air-supply to a greater extent than ever before; and our essential requirements could only be met by its most efficient organisation and control. Not only would the limited number of aircraft available have to be most carefully organised from a purely Air point of view: it would also be necessary for the Army to position the supplies in such a manner as to ensure the most economical use of the aircraft.

515. The troops of Fourteenth Army were now on top of their form: well-trained, seasoned in battle, excellently led, and confident of their superiority over the Japanese. But it was on air-supply that the speed and success of their drive would ultimately depend.[1] It was essential, if the best results were to be obtained, that both the Army and Air Force should be satisfied that the other was making its full contribution; and although C.C.T.F./C.A.A.T.O. was producing excellent results, there had inevitably been occasions on which one service had complained that the other was not pulling its weight. The Army had complained that the tonnages they required were not being delivered; the Air Force, that the Army was not producing the full amount to be carried, and that the ground lines of communication were not being used to capacity. On the 28th March, therefore, I set up (with the full agreement of the Commanders-in-Chief) an Air and Ground Supply Committee, under the chairmanship of my Deputy Principal Administrative Officer,[2] which consisted of representatives of H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A., H.Q. A.C.S.E.A., and the Airborne Operations Division of my own Headquarters.

516. This committee was directed to examine the whole organisation of air-supply,[3] and to recommend methods and procedure for producing even better results than had already been achieved; it was also to examine the working of the ground lines of communication, and to report on whether their capacity could be still further increased.[4] Although in the early stages 4 Corps was to be almost entirely dependent on air-supply—this was eventually confined to the formations operating to the south of Toungoo—those to the north of it were to be supplied by road; and by rail, if the line could be put into working order in time. 33 Corps would be given sufficient air-lift for one division, and the remainder of the Corps would have to rely on road, rail, and inland water transport.

517. The squadrons of 221 Group that were detailed to give close support in the advance were now organised on a highly mobile basis. 4 and 33 Corps would be advancing down the line of the Irrawaddy and the line of the Mandalay–Rangoon railway, respectively[5]; and responsibility for air defence and close support was allotted to 907 Wing on the river axis, and to 906 and 909 Wings on the railway axis. The squadrons and (in the case of 906 and 909 Wings) the Wing Headquarters were to move as closely as possible behind the advancing troops, in a series of leap-frogging movements. Headquarters of 907 Wing was to advance down the line of the Irrawaddy at a slower pace, as it was not expected that the advance on this line would be so rapid as on the railway axis. These three Wings were placed under the direct command of a Group Control Centre: which was to be sited alongside the Headquarters of either 906 or 909 Wing (whichever happened to be in the lead), and was to keep in close touch with the tactical Headquarters of the Corps. Contact was maintained with 907 Wing by way of Fourteenth Army and 221 Group Forward Headquarters. The authority of the Group Control Centre did not extend beyond these three Wings: all other

[1] See 'B', paragraphs 485 and 486.

[2] Major-General R. F. S. (later Sir Reginald) Denning, who in the following September took over as P.A.O. from Lieut.-General Wheeler, when the latter was appointed to command the India–Burma theatre and found that this appointment and his work as Deputy S. A. C. took up too much of his time for him to remain P.A.O. as well. (See 'B,' paragraph 267.)

[3] See Annexure 4 (Page 245).

[4] The overland and river route was developed very fast. In February, 2,688 tons were carried down-river 120 miles from Kalewa to Alon; and in May 20,552 tons were carried 200 miles from Kalewa to Myingyan.

[5] In April, 4 and 33 Corps were to exchange lines of advance (See 'B', paragraph 519).

units remained under direct command of Main Group H.Q., and the conduct of air policy in Central Burma continued to be directed by the joint Army/Air Headquarters.[1]

518. The rapid move of operational squadrons, together with their ground staffs and control centres, was not an easy operation. The majority were moved by air, but some had to use the indifferent roads of Central and Southern Burma, which were then overcrowded with the mechanised transport and armoured vehicles of the advancing troops. As the close-support squadrons moved down into Southern Burma, the long-range squadrons moved forward from Northern Burma and Assam into the Shwebo and Meiktila areas. All these moves made the problem of administration very complicated.[2] So far as possible the units and their servicing echelons were moved by air, both because the Air Force was very short of road transport and also because it was desirable to keep the roads as free as possible for the advancing ground forces. A further, important consideration was that moves could be made more rapidly by air, and this reduced the time for which the units concerned were out of action.

519. Early in April, 4 and 33 Corps began to re-group for the final thrust. Lieut-General Slim had originally intended that 4 Corps should follow the line of the Irrawaddy and that 33 Corps, in roughly equal strength, should follow the line of the Mandalay–Rangoon railway; for he considered that the enemy would be unable to hold our advance on both axes simultaneously. But there were fewer bridges along the railway line, than over the river, which the enemy could destroy behind him; and a swift advance down this axis would cut off the whole of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army and elements of the Fifteenth and Thirty-third Japanese Armies, and prevent them from escaping eastward into the hills. Lieut-General Slim therefore decided to make the quicker thrust down the railway axis, and in greater strength; and this was now allotted to 4 Corps, because it was already concentrated in the Meiktila area (about 50 miles to the south of 33 Corps), and because 5 and 17 Indian Divisions were already organised on a mechanised and air-transportable basis.

520. The new plan involved a cross-over between 4 and 33 Corps. To reach the river axis, the bulk of 33 Corps (consisting of 2 British Division, 20 Indian Division, and 268 Indian Infantry Brigade) would now have to move from the north-east to the south-west across the lines of communication of 4 Corps (consisting of 5 and 17 Indian Divisions, and 255 Tank Brigade); after which it would join up with 7 Indian Division (which was transferred from 4 Corps to 33 Corps) in the Irrawaddy Valley.[3] *En route*, they were to fan out on a broad front, and mop up enemy remnants in the plains and foothills of the Mandalay–Thazi–Chauk triangle to the south and south-west of Mandalay. Lieut-General Slim calculated that, if all went well, it should be possible to throw a cordon round south-western Burma and lock up the Japanese during the monsoon; without supplies, and in highly malarial areas, so that they would either have to surrender, or run the gauntlet across the Irrawaddy Valley, the Pegu Yomas, and the Sittang Valley, before they could escape into Siam.

521. At the re-grouping stage, 4 Corps would secure Pyawbwe and continue striking at the Japanese forces, while concentrating for the thrust to the south; 33 Corps, having moved south and south-west and taken 7 Indian Division under command, would also concentrate for its thrust; while 19 Indian Division, under the direct command of Fourteenth Army, would clear up the area behind 4 Corps and secure the Mandalay–Thazi–Meiktila area, and safeguard the road and rail lines of communication to the south. In the first week of April, 268 Indian Infantry Brigade and one brigade of 2 British Division advanced south-westward from the Myingyan area into the new 33 Corps area of the Irrawaddy, destroying or scattering numerous enemy parties on the way. They met with no serious opposition until reaching Mount Popa, an extinct volcano 5,000 feet high, where the Japanese were strongly entrenched; and where they succeeded in holding out until the 20th April. When the Japanese force had been overcome the brigade of 2 British Division was withdrawn to India, where the whole division would now be held in reserve as a probable follow-up division for DRACULA.

522. 7 Indian Division, now in 33 Corps, had been making steady progress down both sides of the Irrawaddy. On the west bank, they met with very little resistance, on the east bank, they were held up at Kyaukpadaung, but captured the town on the 12th April. Kyaukpadaung, which lies on the main route between Chauk and Meiktila, is the railhead

[1] Which moved from Monywa to Meiktila in the third week of April.

[2] During April no fewer than 80 units were moved forward, and by the end of the month Air Vice-Marshal Vincent was administering squadrons scattered over some 600 miles from Northern Assam to the Toungoo group of airfields.

[3] This intricate manoeuvre was carried out without a hitch, and undoubtedly confused the enemy.

of a branch line which connects with the Mandalay–Rangoon railway at Pyinmana. This important centre of communications had been held by the Japanese throughout the Meiktila battle; and this had compelled 4 Corps to use round-about and inferior routes further north, to maintain contact between Meiktila and Nyaungu. With the Popa–Chauk–Kyaukpadaung area cleared, 7 Indian Division's left flank and rear were now secure; and the advance on the important oil-centre of Yenangyaung began. By the 21st April, the town was encircled; the enemy resisted fiercely but spasmodically; and by the 22nd, Yenangyaung was cleared.

523. In the meantime, 20 Indian Division had completed their operations in the Myittha–Wundwin area; and two of its brigades, which had been re-organised on a mechanised basis, began to move south-westward towards the Irrawaddy. Their advance was first of all directed on Taungdwingyi, which lies on the route over the Pegu Yomas that was being used by units of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army attempting to escape to the east; and which also controls the main road running southward down the Irrawaddy Valley to Allanmyo and Prome. Although it was a vital point on the main Japanese escape route, the town was only garrisoned by Indian National Army troops; for Lieut.-General Sakurai had concentrated his Japanese formations in the Irrawaddy Valley only —to which, as the most direct and obvious line of advance, he had expected that our forward movement would be confined.

524. On the 13th April, the garrison at Taungdwingyi was taken completely by surprise. It would seem that the Japanese Higher Command remained unaware of its capture—or at any rate that some of its units were not notified—for enemy convoys from the Irrawaddy Valley continued for some days afterwards to pour into the town; where they were promptly dealt with by 20 Indian Division. The division then advanced westward to the Irrawaddy, capturing Myingun and Magwe on the 19th April. This gave us control of the Irrawaddy at two points south of Yenangyaung and enabled us to cut off a considerable number of enemy troops on the east bank, who were being driven southward by 7 Indian Division. When they saw that their retreat had been cut off, these troops crossed the river and joined other enemy troops on the west bank. A brigade of 7 Indian Division thereupon followed them across; and the division continued to harry these disorganised forces for the rest of the month; driving the enemy further and further to the south, while his land and water transport were bombed from the air.

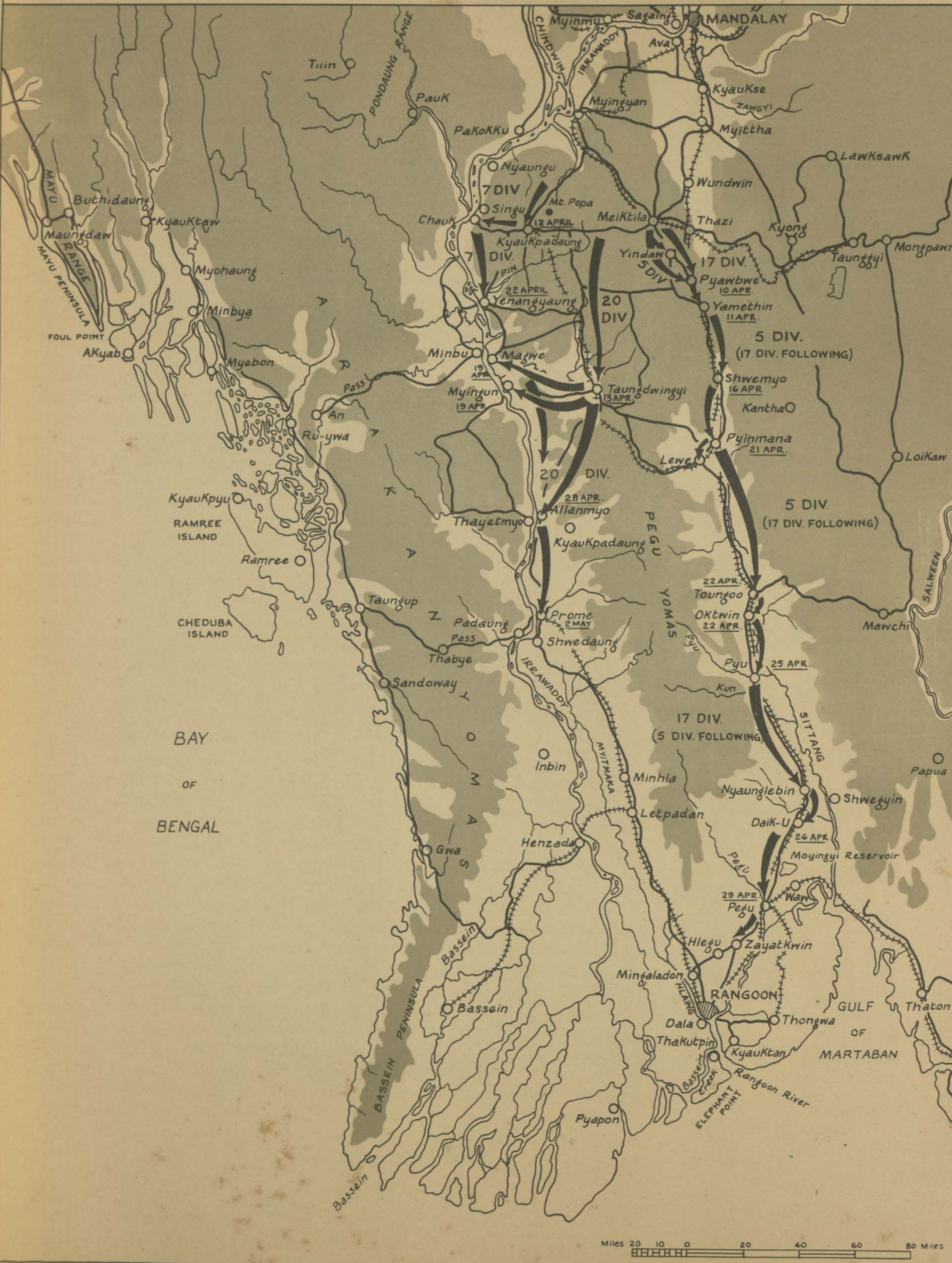
525. At this stage, one brigade of 20 Indian Division was brought forward and directed on Allanmyo; while another, advancing southward from Magwe, laid a number of successful ambushes for parties of the enemy that were trying to re-cross from the west bank and escape across the Pegu Yomas. On the 28th April, Allanmyo fell; and on the 2nd May our capture of Prome, the important river port and easterly terminus of the road from Taungup, cut the last escape route of the remnants of the Japanese forces in Arakan.

526. Throughout April, 4 Corps had made a parallel advance down the axis of the Mandalay–Rangoon railway; its first objective being the capture of Pyinmana and Toungoo, so that we should have a group of airfields from which to support DRACULA.[1] Of the two, the Toungoo group was the more suitable; and 4 Corps was ordered to aim at its capture at the earliest possible moment. Operations had begun on the 30th March, when 17 Indian Division moved southward from Meiktila to capture Pyawbwe—with the tactical aim of exerting pressure on the town from the north and west, while 255 Indian Tank Brigade made the decisive blow from the south-west. The division soon encountered fierce opposition from 49 Japanese Division. Almost every village was defended by suicide parties, which had to be exterminated to the last man; but by this time the division was highly skilled in hand-to-hand fighting, and consequently had little difficulty in liquidating these detachments.

527. The village of Yindaw, however, was found to be very strongly held; and 17 Indian Division was ordered to by-pass it, rather than waste time on its reduction. Its clearance was therefore left to 5 Indian Division, which was following, and to the air forces. For three days Yindaw was bombed and shelled, being eventually taken after the garrison had been almost wholly wiped out. In this sector, our break-through was so quick that 53 Japanese Division marching hard across country to take up its positions west of Pyawbwe, was engaged by a brigade from 17 Indian Division and by 255 Indian Tank Brigade, and suffered severe casualties, before it had even reached its appointed area. Pyawbwe had good natural defensive positions, and Lieut.-General Honda had issued orders for the regrouping of 18 and 49 Japanese Divisions, and 53 Japanese Division (less one regiment) for its defence; but the town fell on the 10th April, after co-ordinated attacks by infantry, tanks and aircraft, in

[1] See Map 32.

# MAP 32. FOURTEENTH ARMY ADVANCE TO RANGOON



which an armoured assault by 255 Indian Tank Brigade proved decisive. This battle scattered the Thirty-third Japanese Army—and in doing so, deprived it of its last chance of meeting 4 Corps in strength and of holding up the thrust on Pegu and Rangoon.

528. On the 11th April, the two mechanised brigades of 5 Indian Division, led by an armoured column,[1] passed through 17 Indian Division[2] at Pyawbwe. The armoured column reached Yamethin on the same day and swept southward through the town; but the infantry and all the "soft-skinned" vehicles, following at a slower pace, were held up by a Japanese suicide squad which had infiltrated into the town during the night and had dug itself in—this was, however, liquidated. At this point, the Japanese Air Force put in one of its rare appearances: four Zeros (two of which were shot down) attacked the armoured column, and destroyed a number of vehicles carrying petrol (gasoline) and ammunition. But there was no serious check to our advance.

529. On the 16th April, Shwemyo was captured without difficulty, but the armoured column and the following brigade were held up just north of Shwemyo Bluff—a strong hill feature, 700 feet high, which at this point dominates the road and railway to the east for several miles. Realising the importance of holding this Bluff, the enemy commander had recently entrusted its defence to an entire regiment of 55 Japanese Division, which had been moved up hurriedly from south-western Burma. But the second of 5 Indian Division's mechanised brigades (which had by now cleared Yamethin) moved forward and made a quick outflanking march through the hills to the east, taking the Japanese in the rear while they were still digging-in. The mechanised brigade cleared the position on the 18th April; and this was very valuable—for a serious hold-up at the Shwemyo Bluff and defile, which had considerable defensive possibilities, would have upset our time-table considerably.

530. In the meantime, 5 Indian Division's air-transportable brigade had come forward by road and taken over the Shwemyo airstrip; and the division now pressed on towards Pyinmana, which the armoured column reached on the 19th April. Bulldozing a by-pass road round the town, it captured Lewe airfield, which was immediately prepared to receive light planes and gliders, and was put into operation on the following day. A brigade of 5 Indian Division undertook the reduction of the town itself, which was completed by the 21st April; and the force then pressed on towards Toungoo. Lieut.-General Honda and most of the Headquarters staff of the Thirty-third Japanese Army were in Pyinmana when our troops arrived, and barely escaped capture. From this time on, this Headquarters appears to have ceased to exercise effective control over its formations and units, which proceeded to fight or retreat as best they could. The race to Toungoo was now on.

531. I considered it vital that the Toungoo airfields should be in our possession by the 25th April if efficient close air support was to be given to DRACULA. I had already told Lieut-General Leese to take all risks, and to accept heavy casualties if these were necessary for the capture of Toungoo in time.[3] With his concurrence, I went forward on the 18th April and discussed the situation with Lieut-General Slim at Monywa, and then with Lieut-General Messervy at Meiktila. Neither of them thought Toungoo could be captured before the first week in May, but I repeated the instructions I had given Lieut.-General Leese. Owing to the hold-up at Yindaw and at Pyawbwe, our advance was now some days behind schedule, and our troops were still 69 miles away. The enemy also realised the importance of Toungoo, not only as an air base but also as a communications centre—for from Toungoo runs the road due eastward to the Salween at Mawchi, and on to Taunggyi, where it meets the only road linking Burma with Northern Siam. The remnants of Thirty-third Japanese Army, driven off the Mandalay–Rangoon road by 4 Corps, were struggling to anticipate our arrival at Toungoo; while 15 Japanese Division was moving with all speed down the Loikaw–Mawchi road to reach Toungoo from the east. 15 Japanese Division was held up by a party of Karen guerillas, under officers of Force 136, who were operating in the area under the tactical control of the Fourteenth Army; while co-ordinated air strikes, observed and directed by Force 136 officers, harried them mercilessly.[4]

532. On the 22nd April, the armoured column, closely followed by a brigade of 5 Indian Division, swept into the town; three days ahead of schedule. Toungoo had been heavily bombed on the previous

[1] An armoured regiment and an armoured reconnaissance group, of 255 Indian Tank Brigade.

[2] Between the 3rd and 11th April, 17 Indian Division killed 2,900 Japanese, and captured or destroyed 44 guns, 6 tanks and 70 vehicles. 255 Indian Tank Brigade also took a heavy toll.

[3] See 'B', paragraph 506.

[4] The air forces gave immense help by bombing enemy motor transport: indeed, in the preceding nine months more than 3,800 Japanese vehicles had been destroyed from the air.

day by 40 Liberators (B-24); but our troops took the Japanese completely by surprise.[1] Toungoo and the area around were cleared within two days; and by the 24th, one of its three airfields was ready and in operation—which meant that our fighters could now cover Rangoon, 166 miles away. By the end of the first day, this airfield had received one hundred Commandos (C-46) and Dakotas (C-47). The Japanese Air Force put in another appearance; and 12 Oscar fighter-bombers twice attacked all three airfields, as well as the armoured columns north of the town. But our casualties were very light, and half the attacking force was brought down.

533. The armoured column and the leading infantry brigade, which had left the clearing-up to the remainder of the division, had swept straight through Toungoo and had reached Oktwin (eight miles to the south) on the evening of the 22nd; where they captured a loaded train on the point of departure, together with its two locomotives. Pushing forward towards Pyu, they received the surrender of more than 3,000 troops of an Indian National Army division.[2] Although the bridge over the Pyu River was down, the crossing was unguarded, and 5 Indian Division captured the village on the further bank without any difficulty, on the 25th. This was as far as the division was to lead the advance; 17 Indian Division, which had been following-up since 5 Indian Division took the lead at Pyawbwe, was now ready to pass through and lead the final dash to Rangoon—capturing Pegu and Zayatkwin airfield areas on the way.

534. In 21 days since the break-out from Meiktila, 4 Corps had advanced 170 miles and had killed 4,800 Japanese. The advance had been so rapid that at times the forward airfield engineers had not been able to keep up. In order, therefore, to ensure the minimum of delay after the occupation of any site where airfields existed or could be built, a reconnaissance party of engineers now travelled with the armoured spearhead. The engineer field companies followed as close behind as they could, though it was a great strain to bring these companies forward at such speed, with all their complicated and heavy equipment; nevertheless, within 11 days they managed to open 9 strips over a distance of 200 miles.[3]

535. After his narrow escape at Pyinmana, Lieut.-General Honda had set up Thirty-third Japanese Army Headquarters at Toungoo, where he had again only just escaped. He was now wandering southward with his staff, largely out of touch with the battle. The loss of Toungoo finally convinced Lieut.-General Kimura that the situation in Southern Burma was untenable, and that his last chance of saving Rangoon had disappeared. He had lost effective control over his Fifteenth and Thirty-third Armies, and now had little in the way of reserves that he could throw in against 4 Corps. Our Intelligence reported that Lieut.-General Kimura intended to fight hard for the vital communications centre of Pegu; and we knew on the 24th April that he had that day transferred his Headquarters to Moulmein.[4] But we did not realise that by the 22nd he had already looked on Rangoon as lost, and had ordered its almost complete evacuation—moving his forces to Moulmein and Pegu in the hope of being able to recapture the capital later on. (We subsequently discovered that he had been ordered by his Supreme Commander, Field-Marshal Terauchi, to hold Southern Burma, at all costs, and Rangoon if he possibly could—but that he had decided to ignore the last part of this order.)

536. The key to the military situation in Southern Burma was Pegu, which controlled the only overland route by which the enemy could now escape to the comparative security of the Tenasserim coast; and the Japanese consequently mobilised every available man in a desperate attempt to hold this town. 24 Independent Mixed Brigade was ordered hurriedly north from Moulmein, to take up positions in the Pegu–Mokpalin area; and two other forces (of approximately brigade strength, and each commanded by a Major-General) were quickly raised in Rangoon, from Japanese garrison troops, shore-based sailors, fishermen and other civilians, and these two "brigades" were rushed to Pegu and ordered "to destroy the enemy north of Payagyi–Waw."

537. On the 25th April, 17 Indian Division, preceded by another armoured column of 255 Indian Tank Brigade, passed through 5 Indian Division at Pyu, as planned; and began their final dash to the south.[5] From Pyu to Rangoon is 144 miles, and there was still a chance that 17 Indian Division could reach

[1] As the armoured column drove into the town, an indignant Japanese traffic policeman tried to stop them; but they ignored his signals and ran him down.

[2] These troops, which had fought half-heartedly against 4 Corps at Imphal exactly a year before, but had seen no action since, provided labour on the three airfields.

[3] Nearly all the airfield engineers were Indian. There was, however, one U.S. glider-borne unit, with bulldozers, which was brought in by air on two occasions—at Lewe airfield, south-west of Pyinmana, and at Tennant airfield, near Toungoo.

[4] Taking with him the rump of Ba Maw's puppet government, and Subhas Chandra Bose, Commander of the Indian National Army.

[5] It was fitting that the assault on Rangoon by the overland route should be allotted to 17 Indian Division, who (with one comparatively brief spell for re-organisation) had been fighting the Japanese ever since the latter's first invasion of Burma on its eastern frontier in December, 1941.

the port before DRACULA. Followed by 5 Indian Division, it moved southward, with the armoured column sweeping all before them. All the leading troops of 4 Corps were now on reduced rations—having sacrificed food for petrol (gasoline). The weather was good and spirits were high. As the force moved southward, 19 Indian Division in reserve took over as far south as Toungoo; where 15 Japanese Division had dug in within artillery range, their guns causing a certain amount of damage and casualties in the town. Supported by Mitchells (B-25), and with valuable assistance from guerrillas who gave useful information about enemy dispositions and troop movements, 19 Indian Division gradually pushed eastward up the Mawchi road, and cleared the surrounding hills.

538. On the 26th, 17 Indian Division reached Daik-U, 85 miles from Rangoon. Next day, they met with opposition near the Moyingyi reservoir; where the road was heavily mined and defended by suicide squads, while movement to the east was limited by the reservoir and on both sides by the marshy nature of the country. But the division was not held up for long; and by the 29th, advanced units of the armoured force had reached the outskirts of Pegu, while another armoured column struck south-eastward off the main road and cut the escape route to the Sittang. On the same day, 17 Indian Division recovered some 400 British and American prisoners of war,[1] who had been marched out of Rangoon in the general withdrawal but had been released when their guards realised the speed and weight of our advance.

539. On the 29th April, the Fourteenth Army's hopes of reaching Rangoon before the monsoon were dashed. That afternoon, torrential rain burst over Pegu, and other parts of Burma; followed by heavy deluges throughout the night. All the forward airstrips, on which close air-support for the assault on Rangoon was to be based, were put out of action; and 221 Group had to withdraw all the close-support squadrons but one from Toungoo. In order to maintain some measure of close support for 4 Corps, the Thunderbolt (P-47) squadrons based on Central Burma now had to be flown to their extreme range; while two Mitchell (B-25) squadrons of U.S. 12th Bombardment Group were brought forward into Central Burma and given the unusual task of providing direct support to advancing troops.

540. Tanks and vehicles were now unable to deploy off the main road; and the Pegu River, which before the downpour might with difficulty have been fordable, now rose in flood and barred all forward movement. There were three bridges over the river on our line of advance; the main bridge in Pegu town, a railway bridge about a mile to the north, and another railway bridge about three miles further north still. The enemy had organised strong defensive positions on both sides of the river, and had prepared all three bridges for demolition. On the 30th April, in spite of appalling weather and "suicide" resistance by the Japanese, a brigade of 17 Indian Division (supported by the armoured force) gained a foothold in that part of Pegu which lies on the east bank. At the same time, another brigade forced a crossing of the river over the ruins of the northernmost railway bridge, which the enemy had demolished that day—an operation which was undertaken under heavy fire, in conditions aggravated by the weather and by the difficult terrain.

541. After two days, Pegu was finally cleared of all but a few snipers and suicide squads. Although the enemy had by then demolished the two other bridges, the river was crossed by means of a Bailey bridge over the site which the northernmost railway bridge had occupied. One brigade was left on the east bank, to hold Pegu; while the remainder of the division, as soon as it could be concentrated on the west bank, continued its advance to Rangoon on the 2nd May, after a most gallant and successful action.

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D-Day for DRACULA was the 2nd May. By the 25th April, preparations had been completed; and units of the naval assault force (Force "W"), under the command of Rear-Admiral Martin, had assembled at Akyab and Kyaukpyu; forming up into six convoys (not counting the carrier force), of which the slowest sailed on the 27th April, while the main convoy sailed on the 30th with H.M.S. LARGS, which was carrying the Force Commanders. The carrier force[2] provided fighter protection for the convoys, in conjunction with 224 Group (in which six squadrons of the Royal Indian Air Force were now operating). Most of the tactical air-support was to be provided by 224 Group, of which 902 and 903 Wings had now moved forward to Kyaukpyu and Akyab respectively,

[1] Among these prisoners were men of 17 Indian Division who had been captured in 1942.

[2] Under Commodore G. N. Oliver, commanding the 21st Aircraft Carrier Squadron : consisting of the cruiser ROYALIST (broad pendant) ; the escort carriers HUNTER, STALKER, EMPEROR and KHEDIVE ; and four destroyers: with the cruiser PHOEBE as fighter direction ship.

sufficiently near to give effective long-range fighter support. Fighter and fighter-bomber squadrons were to be used, in conjunction with the naval aircraft of the 21st Aircraft Carrier Squadron, for escort and close support duties, offensive and defensive reconnaissance, etc., while it was intended that 221 Group should carry out their supporting operations from the Toungoo group of airfields.

543. Heavy bomber support was to be provided by eight Liberator (B-24) squadrons of the Strategic Air Force, and by four Mitchell (B-25) squadrons of the U.S. 12th Bombardment Group. Two transport squadrons had been taken off air-supply, to fly in the airborne troops; and the few transport aircraft which were still supporting 82 West African Division around Taungup were to be used for supplying the assault troops until it should become possible to supply them by sea. On the 30th April, units of the covering force,[1] which had sailed from Trincomalee, carried out bombardments and air strikes against the airfields of Car Nicobar, as well as against the airfields and shore batteries of Port Blair in the Andaman Islands (Operation BISHOP)—in order to prevent Japanese naval forces in the south from interfering with the amphibious operation. On the 30th, also, the destroyer force[2] which was operating in the Gulf of Martaban (Operation GABLE), intercepted and sank nine out of a convoy of eleven enemy craft (and one escort), carrying about 1,000 Japanese troops trying to escape from Rangoon to Moulmein.

544. In planning for DRACULA, it had been calculated that the enemy would be able to muster about 41,000 troops in the area south of a line Taungup–Prome–Toungoo, from which 11 combat battalions could be raised; and the strength of his air force had been estimated at about 40 aircraft in Burma, and 50 in Siam. We had been unable, however, to make a precise estimate of the number of men that Lieut.-General Kimura intended to allocate to the defence of Rangoon; though we had been forced to assume that he would fight hard to retain this port, which seemed as vital to his plans as it was to our own. But we did know, from captured documents, that he considered the 12th April to be the last day by which we were likely to attempt an amphibious landing. We expected no immediate naval opposition; except, possibly, from some Motor Torpedo Boats which had been reported (incorrectly, as it turned out) in the area; and from a few landing craft—while the covering force would be able to deal with any attempted interference by the Japanese cruisers based on Singapore.

545. In the early morning of D-minus-1, all known enemy-defended positions and gun-sites on both sides of the Rangoon river were bombarded from the air, special attention being paid to the defences of Elephant Point. This bombardment was followed, that same morning, by the dropping of a battalion of 50 Indian Parachute Brigade, which proceeded to destroy the few remaining defenders of this strong-point, suffering only 40 casualties themselves. As there were now no defences to hinder them, the mine-sweepers, which on 1st May had swept the anchorage and a channel up to the mouth of the Rangoon River, entered the river next day, after the assault had begun, and swept upstream as far as Thakutpin; at the junction of the Bassein Creek with the Rangoon River, twelve miles north of Elephant Point.[3]

546. Early on the 1st May, an aircraft flying over the town reported that a message was painted on the roof of Rangoon Gaol saying that the Japanese had gone. No action was taken on this message, and bombing continued throughout the 1st and 2nd May. A Mosquito pilot of 221 Group and his navigator had the distinction of being the first members of our forces to re-enter Rangoon. On the afternoon of the 2nd May, they were flying low over the area, and, seeing no enemy activity, decided to land at Mingaladon airfield. This was in very bad condition, and the aircraft crashed on landing. The pilot therefore walked into Rangoon and visited the gaol, where he met former prisoners of war who confirmed that the Japanese had completed their evacuation. Later in the evening, he sailed down the river in a sampan and passed on the news to the vanguard of the assault force. On the strength of this information the bombing of objectives in Rangoon was stopped, the programme of air support was modified, and the build-up which was to follow the initial landings was cancelled. Early next morning, D-Day, the weather took a turn for the worse. Rear-Admiral Martin was at first doubtful whether the small craft would be able to make the journey from the lowering positions to the Rangoon River, across the stretch of open sea; but he decided to accept the risks, and ordered the operation to continue.

[1] Under Vice-Admiral H. C. T. Walker, commanding the 3rd Battle Squadron. This force consisted of the battleships QUEEN ELIZABETH and RICHELIEU; the escort carriers EMPRESS and SHAH; the cruisers CUMBERLAND (Flagship R.A. 5th Cruiser Squadron, Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson), SUFFOLK, CEYLON, and TROMP; and six destroyers. See Chart 'C' on pages 148 and 149.

[2] Under Commodore A. L. Poland, Commodore (Destroyers), East Indies Fleet.

[3] One L.C.T. was sunk by a mine on D + 1; an L.S.I., H.M.S SILVIO, was damaged by a mine on D + 6.

547. With excellent seamanship, the crews succeeded in reaching the river, and in putting 26 Indian Division, the leading seaborne assault troops, ashore as planned. One brigade, landing on the west bank, immediately pushed north across the Bassein Creek; while another, landing at the mouth of the Hmawwun Chaung on the east bank, captured the suburb of Kyauktan later in the day. A few hours after the first landings, torrential rains fell over all parts of the battle-front: the monsoon had started early, and had arrived at the same time as the assault. The forward airfields of 221 Group had been virtually put out of action by the pre-monsoon rains on the 29th April, and were now completely put out of action; such close-support as was possible for the exploitation of DRACULA had now to be carried out by 224 Group from the airfields in Arakan, while supply-dropping activities were gravely hampered.

548. By the evening of the 3rd May, the brigade of 26 Indian Division which had crossed the Bassein Creek, reached the south bank of the Hlaing River, opposite Rangoon; crossed the river, and penetrated the docks and into the town itself, where they met with only scattered opposition and suffered few casualties. At this time, 17 Indian Division, was still 32 miles to the north, on the Pegu road. Although the Fourteenth Army had lost the "race for Rangoon," it was their drive, helped by 221 Group, which had really won the battle; for if their rapid advance had not forced Lieut.-General Kimura to evacuate the port, DRACULA—which beat the monsoon by only a few hours—would have met with severe opposition. As it was, the port was opened 14 days earlier than would have been possible overland; and since the administrative machinery of the Fourteenth Army had been stretched to its limit in the advance on Rangoon, this may well have made the whole difference to the adequate maintenance of the Army throughout the monsoon.

# SYNOPSIS

# B. STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS

## SECTION EIGHT: MAY TO SEPTEMBER 1945

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Forces from Rangoon link up with Fourteenth Army; Twenty-eighth Japanese Army cut off in the west; 4 Corps' difficulties of supply; Rehabilitation of Rangoon port; Air bases established; Plan for assault across the Sittang abandoned; Irrawaddy axis cleared.

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Overall strategical position of the Japanese; Decision to launch ZIPPER in the second half of August; ROGER cancelled; ZIPPER forces withdraw to India to prepare; Expectation of reinforcements from Europe; ZIPPER plan; Schemes for preventing reinforcement of Malaya; Fourteenth Army Headquarters withdrawn to India to control ZIPPER preparations; Twelfth Army formed; Difficulties raised by PYTHON; ZIPPER postponed to first half of September.

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All U.S.A.A.F. units withdrawn from S.E.A.C.; R.A.F. units re-organised; Twelfth Army's tasks; B.N.A. now operating in co-ordination with our forces; Twenty-eighth Japanese Army prepare to break out from the Pegu Yomas; Thirty-third Japanese Army's diversionary attacks across the Sittang; "Battle of the Break-out"; Virtual end of the campaign in Burma.

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Fleet operations during 1945.

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Long-range Air operations during 1945.

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Post-MAILFIST operations planned; S.E.A.C. boundaries discussed; Operations in Siam likely in December; Visit to General of the Army MacArthur's Headquarters; Co-ordination of plans between the two Commands; Closer liaison proposed; Potsdam Conference; Suggested addition of territory to S.E.A.C. boundaries decided on; Atomic bomb divulged; Planning continued in London; Return to Kandy; Capitulation of Japan; All operations in S.E.A.C. suspended.

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Extensive new responsibilities and commitments; No Intelligence provided for the new areas; Plans for re-occupation; Re-occupation postponed; Preliminary surrender signed at Rangoon; Sabang, Penang, and Singapore re-occupied; Staging-post established at Bangkok; Inter-Service Control Commission flown to Saigon; ZIPPER andings made; The Instrument of Surrender is signed at Singapore.

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26 Indian Division, which suffered only 100 casualties in the course of the capture of Rangoon (which it had completed by the 5th May), was ordered to develop the airfield at Mingaladon; while columns of the division went northward up the Pegu road and the Prome road, to link up with 4 and 33 Corps respectively. On the 6th, a link-up was made with 17 Indian Division at Hlegu, 28 miles north of Rangoon[1]; whereupon 26 Indian Division (including its main body, which had remained in the city) passed out of 15 Corps and came under direct command of Fourteenth Army. Now that the leading troops of the 15 Corps forces which had captured Rangoon had linked up with the vanguard of the Fourteenth Army, Twenty-eighth Japanese Army was cut off from the remainder of the Burma Area Army, scattered throughout the Sittang Valley; and the liquidation of these forces in South-Western Burma would now be the main task of the Fourteenth Army and 221 Group.

550. In addition to 4 Corps and 33 Corps, Fourteenth Army now had under its direct command: 26 Indian Division, 36 British Division (operating in the Meiktila area) and the Lushai Brigade[2]. 4 Corps was strung out along the main Meiktila–Rangoon road from Pyinmana to Hlegu: 19 Indian Division (less one brigade) was based on Toungoo, and was operating eastward along the Toungoo–Mawchi road; 5 Indian Division, concentrating at Payagyi, was pushing out columns westward towards the Sittang; 17 Indian Division was deployed between Pegu and Hlegu; and 255 Indian Tank Brigade was concentrated at Pegu. 33 Corps was operating in the Irrawaddy Valley, between Magwe and Prome. In the northern sector, 7 Indian Division was preventing troops of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army from escaping across the Irrawaddy into the Pegu Yomas; in the centre, 268 Indian Infantry Brigade and 254 Indian Tank Brigade (under the operational control of 20 Indian Division[3]) were holding the enemy on the west bank around Thayetmyo; and in the south, 20 Indian Division was pursuing the enemy southwards down the valley, and south-westward down the Prome–Rangoon road. Meanwhile, 82 West African Division with an additional brigade, having finished the clearance of Arakan, was patrolling southward down the coast from Taungup and eastward along the Taungup–Prome road.

551. The speed of the advance from Meiktila had stretched the administrative machinery of 4 Corps almost to breaking-point; the troops had already been put on half rations, as a precautionary measure, so that a drastic reduction in the scale of air-supply could be effected—and the port of Rangoon was not yet in operation. Since it was not possible to supply 4 Corps adequately by sea or from the air, it now had to depend almost entirely on the land line of communication from Manipur. This route, which for six months had carried a continuous stream of tanks, guns, transporters, and lorries, was in a very bad state of repair and was deteriorating still further as the monsoon progressed; its capacity was therefore much reduced, and stocks of food, ammunition and other essential stores were running dangerously low.

552. There was small hope of an appreciable rise in the air-lift; so the solution lay in opening and rehabilitating the port of Rangoon[4] as soon as possible for large ships, and in building up an air-base in Southern Burma—while doing what was possible, by land and air transport, to establish stock-piles in Central Burma within easy reach of 4 Corps' area. The immediate development of Rangoon, and the area adjacent to it, was necessary not only for maintaining 4 Corps and other land and air forces; it was necessary for supplying the civilian population of Burma, and providing facilities for light naval forces—while the area had also to be developed as a main base for further air operations in Burma, and subsequently, as the forward mounting area for ZIPPER. The Engineers set about the primary task of restoring the badly-damaged port facilities; as well as the construction of railway sidings and airstrips, and the erection of store-houses, workshops, and accommodation, etc.[5] Three berths were available on the 3rd May (though, owing to the necessity of sweeping the river, they could not be used until the 8th); by the 12th, several berths had already been opened for the unloading of troops, motor transport and stores; and by the middle of June 3,000 tons of stores were being discharged daily.

[1] On the 15th May, advanced elements of 26 Indian Division linked up with 20 Indian Division on the Prome road, 60 miles north of Rangoon (See 'B', paragraph 561)

[2] For dispositions at this time, see Map 33 (facing page 164).

[3] 20 Indian Division was under the direct command of A.L.F.S.E.A.

[4] This operation was known as STANZA.

[5] The overall effort of the Engineers throughout the campaign is indicated in Annexure 6. (Page 252).

553. In the meantime our immediate short-term task must be to exploit the advantage which the possession of Rangoon gave us, in order to drive the Japanese out of the few remaining parts of Burma that they still held. The land formations of the Burma Area Army, now largely disorganised, were grouped in four isolated areas:[1] east of the Meiktila–Rangoon road; around the estuary of the Sittang and down the Tenasserim coast; between the Sittang and the Irrawaddy; and west of the Irrawaddy and in the Irrawaddy Delta. The first of these groups was concentrated in the Shan and Karenni hills, between the Meiktila–Rangoon road and the Siamese border. This force, which consisted of the remnants of the Fifteenth Japanese Army and elements of the Thirty-third Japanese Army, was mainly split up into small parties, trying to re-form and escape to Siam or down to the Tenasserim coast—most of them out of touch with their unit and formation headquarters.

554. The second group, concentrated at the mouth of the Sittang and along the Tenasserim coastal strip between Mokpalin and Moulmein, consisted of the remainder of the Thirty-third Japanese Army. It was clear (and post-war interrogation of Japanese generals confirmed this) that the enemy was laying special emphasis on escape routes to the south; and that General Kimura,[2] planning to hold us for as long as possible on the west bank of the Sittang, so that we should not cut the Mawchi–Papun–Moulmein routes, intended to concentrate what was left of his broken armies on the Tenasserim coastal strip. The Fifteenth and Thirty-third Japanese Armies organised strong flank- and rearguards covering the Meiktila–Taunggyi and Toungoo–Mawchi roads; and although we realised that their main intention was to keep these escape routes open, it seemed likely that they would attempt a counter-offensive in order to interfere with our land line of communication between Rangoon and the north—and also to assist the break-out of elements of the original Rangoon garrison, which was cut off in the Pegu area west of the Sittang.

555. The third group of the Burma Area Army was in the Pegu Yomas, between the Sittang and the Irrawaddy. This consisted of the Headquarters and elements of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army; and the greater part of this force was preparing to make a stand against the leading troops of 33 Corps, which were approaching Prome by the beginning of May.[3] The fourth main group was still west of the Irrawaddy; it consisted of the remainder of Twenty-eighth Japanese Army, which was hoping to cross the river and reach the Pegu Yomas, when the attention of 33 Corps in this area was diverted. All the formations of the Burma Area Army (excepting 56 Japanese Division, which had never been heavily engaged on the N.C.A.C. front and was still more or less intact) were greatly reduced in numbers and largely disorganised. The Japanese Air Force, completely broken and deprived of nearly all its bases, showed small inclination to operate its remaining aircraft from the new airfields still held on the Tenasserim coast and in Siam—all of which were now within range of our bombers and long-range fighters[4]. Finally, the East Indies Fleet had undisputed command of the sea.

556. Lieut.-General Slim gave 4 Corps the following tasks:—

(*a*) to cross the Sittang and if possible capture Mokpalin and Kyaikto (on the river estuary);

(*b*) to destroy the enemy forces west of the Sittang as soon as they tried to escape to the east; and

(*c*) to capture Thandaung (a dominating position 29 miles north-east of Toungoo).

557. As there was no serviceable bridge over the Pegu River[5], and no possibility of bringing in enough bridging material to make one, the whole of 17 Indian Division had to be withdrawn north of Pegu: its new sector stretched from Pyu in the north to Pyingbongyi in the south, and its main task was to prevent any Japanese attempt at breaking out eastward from the Pegu Yomas. In this sector 'V' Force patrols (consisting of one officer and about a dozen Gurkhas from the Assam Rifles, equipped with a wireless transmitter) were sent to probe into the enemy-held foothills of the Yomas; while guerrilla parties of Force 136 and detachments of the Burma National Army carried out a steady and successful campaign of attrition in the Pegu Yomas and on both banks of the Sittang.[6]

558. 5 Indian Division took over the sector south of Pyingbongyi, and was given the task of securing Kyaikto as soon as possible, provided this could be done without heavy casualties. The division immediately pushed out patrols to the Sittang, some of

[1] See Map 33 (facing page 164).

[2] Whose promotion from Lieut.-General was announced two days after the fall of Rangoon.

[3] See 'B', paragraph 525.

[4] In June, Air Chief Marshal Park was in fact able to withdraw all fighters from defensive and escort duties.

[5] The Bailey bridge already constructed (see 'B', paragraph 541) had become unserviceable because torrential rains had made the approaches to each bank impassable.

[6] 'V' Force, Force 136 parties, and the Burma National Army, were operating in support of the regular forces, and under the operational control of Lieut.-General Slim.

which crossed over to the east bank. Here the Japanese had established strong-points covering the beach exits from the river; at almost every point, cliffs on the east bank gave the enemy a commanding view of the westward approaches, which were completely flat. Apart from this, the capture of Kyaikto was not physically possible at this stage, for the whole area over which the troops would have to fight was flooded. Not only would it have been almost impossible to build a reliable land line of communication to suitable crossing-points from Pegu (where 5 Indian Division was based); but there were neither enough craft for a proper assault across the river, nor enough powered craft for an adequate water line of communication between Rangoon and the bridgehead forces—and in any case, the floods and the softness of the ground precluded the use of tanks and guns for the operation.

559. The project of an assault crossing of the Sittang was therefore abandoned. 5 Indian Division was ordered to remain ready to occupy Mokpalin with one battalion if the enemy showed any sign of withdrawal; to concentrate on securing the divisional base in the Pegu–Payagyi area, and mopping-up the remnants of the late Rangoon garrison; to maintain contact with 26 Indian Division to the south-west of Pegu; and to obtain information about enemy movements in the southern hills of the Pegu Yomas. Following the cancellation of the Kyaikto operation, the division's activities in the south were confined to patrolling and to a small-scale operation against enemy parties in the Pegu area.

560. 19 Indian Division (less one brigade) was ordered to deploy along the main road between Toungoo and Pyu; its primary task being to destroy any Japanese force in this area which might attempt to break out eastward from the Pegu Yomas. Its secondary task was to continue operations along the Mawchi road, where gradual progress was being made over close mountain country against strong enemy rearguards; and finally, if it became clear that the Japanese were not planning an immediate break-out from the Yomas, operations on the Mawchi road were to be given priority. In the event, the Japanese made no concerted attempt to break out; and the division continued to make slow progress up the Mawchi road, reaching Milestone 13 from Toungoo, where the road to Thandaung branches off to the north-east, on the 28th May. Further north, on the Kalaw road, one brigade of 19 Indian Division took over from the remaining brigade of 36 British Division[1] and began to clear the difficult mountain sector north of Kalaw: in spite of the enemy's holding good natural defensive positions, the brigade made good headway and captured Kalaw on the 7th June.

561. 33 Corps had in the meantime been operating in the Irrawaddy Valley; where it had been ordered to open the road and railway from Prome to Rangoon, and to destroy whatever enemy forces remained in the Valley and in the Delta. 20 Indian Division, having captured Prome on the 2nd May, had pushed down the road towards Rangoon. One brigade had begun to advance down the east bank of the Irrawaddy, to cover and ambush likely crossing-places for an eastward escape into the Pegu Yomas.[2] In the next ten days, the brigade put out columns westward along the Taungup road, and fought a number of successful engagements with stragglers from 55 Japanese Division. Another brigade of 20 Indian Division, carrying on operations down the road towards Rangoon, linked up on the 15th May with 26 Indian Division, 60 miles from Rangoon. On the 25th May, 26 Indian Division (which had meanwhile passed from the direct command of Fourteenth Army to that of 33 Corps) occupied Bassein,[3] where it found the Navy already installed: two Landing Craft, Personnel (L.C.P.), having arrived there two days previously.

562. In the Irrawaddy Valley, the main fighting was now around Zalon (a village on the east bank, about ten miles north of Prome). Early in May, 54 Japanese Division had established a bridgehead here, as a base at which to concentrate before escaping into the Pegu Yomas; a regiment of 49 Japanese Division, and 72 Independent Mixed Brigade, had already succeeded in crossing the river at several points just north of Prome and escaping into the hills. Lieut.-General Stopford considered that it would be impossible, with the troops at his disposal, to block every avenue of escape that was open to 54 Japanese Division, and that small enemy parties would always be able to reach the Pegu Yomas unobserved. He therefore concentrated elements of 7 Indian Division, and two brigades, against the bridgehead at Zalon : the enemy made determined efforts in May and early June to break out, but they were beaten back with heavy losses.

[1] Which was now flown to India to rejoin the other two brigades of the division (which had been flown out during the first half of May) in preparing for ZIPPER. See 'B', paragraph 566.

[2] This operation was assisted by the gun-boats PAMELA and UNA, which had been built in emergency boat-yards at Kalewa; earlier in the year, they had taken part in the Chindwin operations (See footnote to 'B', paragraph 300).

[3] In co-operation with Force 'W'. At Lieut-General Leese's request, Admiral Power had ordered Rear-Admiral Martin on the 7th May to employ his available coastal forces in assisting Fourteenth Army in the Irrawaddy Delta.

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With Rangoon in our hands, we were now able to take stock of the overall strategic position: and in particular that of the Japanese Higher Command. The threat of the total isolation of the Expeditionary Forces in the South Regions from the Japanese homeland had for some time now been very real. When the Americans had occupied key islands in the Mariana and Palau groups in the Pacific, in the Summer of 1944, it had already become clear that the ultimate aim of the Allies was the occupation of Japan itself; and with the invasion of the Philippines in October, the split had begun in the line of communication between Japan and her conquered territories—which was the bogey of the Higher Command.[1] By February, 1945, the Americans had extended their Philippines campaign to Luzon, following up this success with assaults on Iwojima and Okinawa; and by the time we captured Rangoon, it was clear that the capture of Okinawa was imminent: and that the Japanese forces in the Pacific and in South-East Asia were about to be cut off from Japan.[2]

564. Field-Marshal Terauchi had withdrawn the Supreme Headquarters of the Expeditionary Forces in the Southern Regions from Manila to Saigon in November, 1944; and in February, 1945, he had been given full operational control of all naval forces in his Command—these having until then only been under his general strategic direction. It was clear that the attrition of Japanese forces in New Guinea and in the Outer Islands of the Netherlands East Indies, combined with the now obvious Allied designs on Japan itself, were forcing Field-Marshal Terauchi to draw in his perimeter. Henceforward he would have to concentrate on containing our forces in the western extremity of his Command, while looking on French Indo-China, Siam, Malaya, and Sumatra as the hard core of his defences. Within this restricted perimeter, Field-Marshal Terauchi would now have to become completely self-sufficient, with no hope of reinforcements of men or material from outside; and although his Command included the rich Netherlands East Indies, and he would be able to tap adequate resources of natural supplies, he suffered from a severe lack of machines and of manufactured spares for the equipment of the three services. He could anticipate that the end of the war in Europe, at the beginning of May, would mean the gradual reinforcement of my Command; and he could undoubtedly foresee that Singapore would be my next main objective. But he could not know where we would strike, or when—and it later transpired that his appreciation of both these factors was inaccurate.[3]

565. In view of the rapidly deteriorating position of the Japanese land forces, and the virtual eclipse of enemy sea and air forces in all parts of South-East Asia, I decided that ZIPPER should be launched at the earliest possible moment (in the second half of August); and that the risk should be taken of omitting the capture of Phuket Island—which could have been undertaken only at the expense of delaying both ZIPPER and MAILFIST.[4] But I was not entirely happy about the abandonment of Operation ROGER, since I considered a forward base to help ZIPPER (particularly for aircraft) would have been of the greatest value; it was essential that the assaults should be supported by the maximum fighter and fighter-bomber cover, and distances from the mounting bases in India and Southern Burma, to the initial landing-points in the Port Swettenham–Port Dickson area, were far beyond the range of land-based air-support. Since ROGER was to be cancelled, I asked the Chiefs of Staff on the 4th May if the 11th Aircraft Carrier Squadron of light fleet carriers, which had only just left South-East Asia, could be borrowed from the British Pacific Fleet, to give close air-support to the landings. The Chiefs of Staff could not agree to this; but promised to increase my carrier-borne air strength by one escort carrier, and two general purpose carriers which would ferry fighters to the assault area.

566. Detailed planning and mounting of ZIPPER now began. On the 12th May, Rear-Admiral Martin, Lieut.-General Christison, and Air Vice-Marshal Bandon had withdrawn the staffs, formations and units of Force 'W,' 15 Corps and 224 Group to India,

[1] This was explicitly stated in an Imperial Directive to Field-Marshal Terauchi in January, 1945, of which we learned after the Japanese surrender.

[2] Okinawa was cleared of the enemy in June.

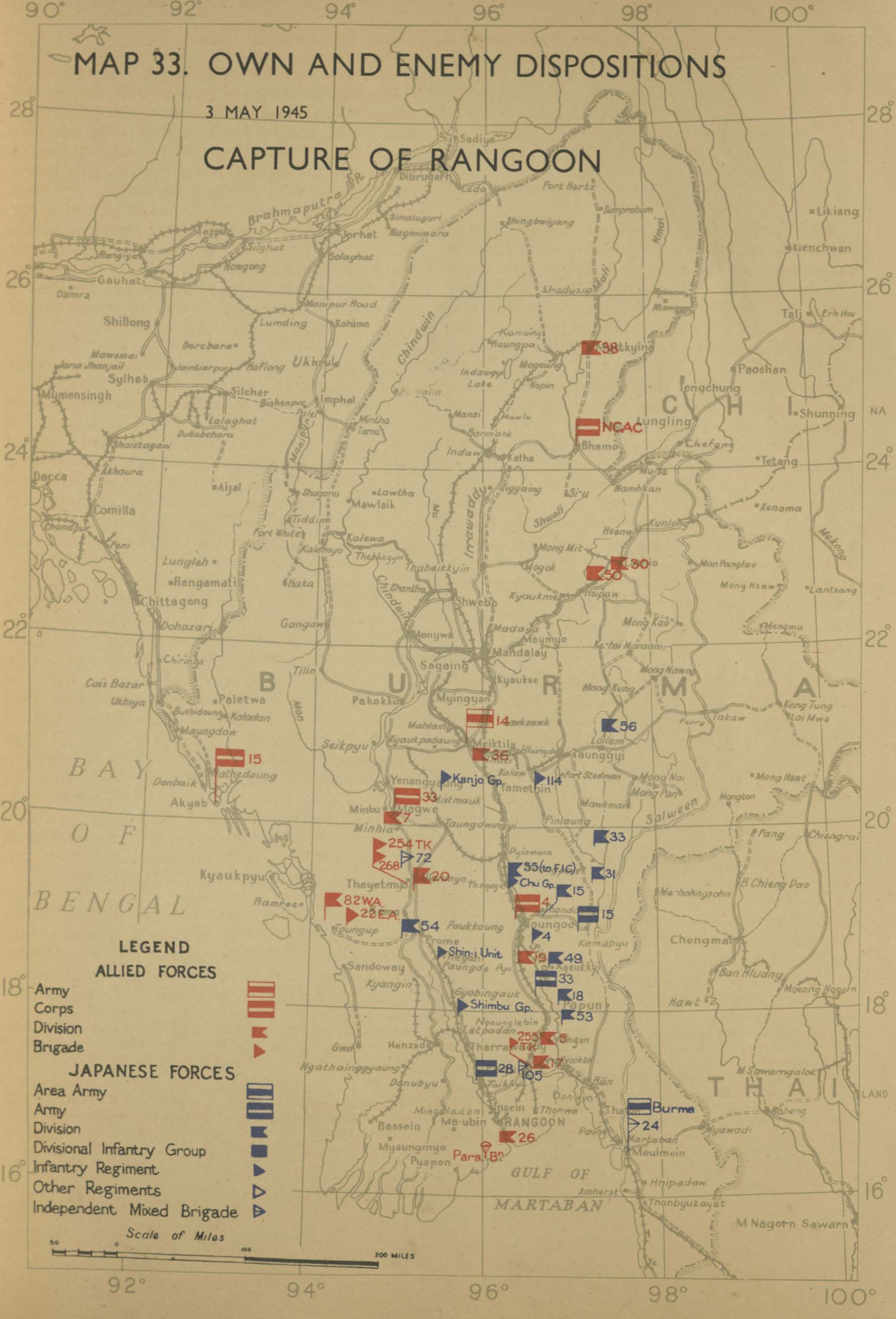
[3] In fact, he believed that we would advance southwards overland down the Kra Isthmus and through Malaya; and that preliminary air attacks would be made in these areas about June or July. He further suspected that in August we would land either on Phuket Island or in Sumatra, or both. Thereafter he expected us to advance down Malaya in a series of sea-borne 'hooks': finally taking Singapore from the mainland.

[4] ZIPPER—assault on Port Swettenham and Port Dickson area. MAILFIST—capture of Singapore. ROGER—capture of Phuket Island.

# MAP 33. OWN AND ENEMY DISPOSITIONS

3 MAY 1945

## CAPTURE OF RANGOON



(where the newly-formed 34 Corps, under the command of Lieut.-General O. L. Roberts,[1] was also concentrated); and the three Commanders were carrying out the planning in my Rear Headquarters at Delhi. The land and air formations and naval forces withdrawn from active operations were now to be re-organised, re-equipped, rested and trained in India and Ceylon. All other forces that could be spared from operations were concentrated in and around Rangoon (which was to be the base for ZIPPER forces mounted from Burma) for rest, training and re-fit. Apart from naval air forces, naval resources already in the theatre or firmly allocated to it were more or less adequate for the operations.

567. When it had been agreed, in October,[2] that Germany could not be defeated before the Spring of 1945, and that the sending of reinforcements to S.E.A.C. must be postponed, the Chiefs of Staff had informed General Auchinleck and myself that these would however be sent at the earliest possible moment. Later, they issued a directive giving totals of the reinforcements we could expect, and instructing General Auchinleck to make due preparations in India for their reception and mounting for future operations in South-East Asia Command. Since that date therefore General Auchinleck had been working continuously to prepare India for their arrival; while my own staff and those of the Commanders-in-Chief had been preparing details of the exact reinforcements required and the order in which they should arrive. On the 21st April, when the end of the war in Europe was imminent, these preliminaries were almost completed; and I had been able to send the Chiefs of Staff full details of the scheme.

568. Victory in Europe was celebrated on the 8th May, and we now could look forward to the arrival of reinforcements of men and material which would make it possible to plan for post-MAILFIST operations. Allowing a short interval for the re-organisation and transportation of these, it could be confidently expected that the first contingents would begin to arrive in India by the autumn. Preliminary Army reinforcements were to include two Corps headquarters (one of them airborne), three infantry divisions, one airborne division, one armoured division, the Commando Group Headquarters, and another Commando brigade. R.A.F. reinforcements which were to include forty-seven operational squadrons (together with a substantial number of glider and maintenance units) were to arrive in batches, beginning approximately three months after VE-Day: and this was most important, since all U.S. air forces in South-East Asia Command were due to be withdrawn to the China theatre on the 1st June.[3]

569. In general, the plan for the initial ZIPPER landing was to use two infantry divisions and one brigade, and to build up to a total strength of five divisions, one armoured brigade, and one parachute brigade—two further divisions being available for subsequent operations. This force would be lifted in two small and two large Landing Ships, Headquarters, (L.S.H.), ten Landing Ships, Infantry, (L.S.I.), fifty-nine Landing Ships, Tank, (L.S.T.), and a great number of major and minor landing-craft. Units of the East Indies Fleet would carry out sea bombardments. Initial close air-support would be given by carrier-borne aircraft of the East Indies Fleet; and later, when strips had been built in the bridgehead area, by 224 Group—who would be responsible for operating transport aircraft in the bridgehead. The organisation and arming of the Resistance movement in Malaya (A.J.U.F.)[4] was being hastened; and stores and equipment for this were being flown in. The guerilla forces numbered at this time more than 3,000, and had been consistently supplied with ammunition and special equipment, dropped by Liberators based on India; and the plan for ZIPPER included their assistance to the landings.

570. It was difficult to obtain satisfactory Intelligence, owing to the insufficiency of our resources and the great distances involved; but valuable work in this respect was done by parties from the Small Operations Group[5] and from all three services. It was known, in any case, that the potential enemy build-up was considerable: Japanese garrisons in the Netherlands East Indies, in Siam, and in French Indo-China, were being depleted to provide reinforcements for Malaya and Singapore. Intelligence disclosed the movement of two divisions and two independent mixed brigades, in addition to several thousand miscellaneous combat and support troops; and it was estimated that, by D-Day, Singapore and Johore alone would be held by the equivalent of three divisions and a shore-based naval brigade.

571. It was very difficult to carry out an effective and sustained offensive against the enemy lines of

[1] Previously in command of 23 Indian Division.

[2] See 'B', paragraph 262.

[3] See 'B', paragraph 464.

[4] See 'B', paragraph 489.

[5] The Small Operations Group (S.O.G.) was a holding organisation for special inter-service units of uniformed men trained and equipped to operate secretly in coastal, river and lake areas. They included Combined Operations Pilotage Parties, Sea Reconnaissance Units (swimmers), Royal Marine Detachment 385 (canoeists) and Special Boat Sections of the Commandos.

communication to Malaya and Singapore from the Netherlands East Indies, Siam and French Indo-China. First of all, there was a lack of aviation engineering resources, and this combined with the shipping shortage (for transporting such resources as there were) to prevent Air Command from moving forward a sufficient number of heavy bombers into advanced operational bases in Burma. Secondly, there were in point of fact few decisive targets which could be effectively attacked; and thirdly, the enemy's lines of communication were short, and they were situated where he could trickle in reinforcements in coasters and landing-craft without danger of interception at sea or from the air. In an attempt to offset these disadvantages, we had for some time been employing various stratagems to prevent the enemy from reinforcing Malaya and Singapore.

572. Now that the main campaign in Burma was concluded, and that further large-scale operations were impending, I decided on an overall reorganisation of the higher Army Command—which took some time to complete. Lieut.-General Slim, whom I sent to England on long-overdue leave, was promoted General and succeeded Lieut.-General Leese as C.-in-C. Allied Land Forces; and from early July Lieut.-General Christison officiated for General Slim as C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A. until the latter's return in August. Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey, who had been commanding the Second Army in Europe, came out to take over command of the Fourteenth Army, whose Headquarters were withdrawn to India to take control of 15 Corps and 34 Corps for ZIPPER. On the 28th May, 33 Corps was disbanded; and on the same day Twelfth Army Headquarters, commanded by Lieut.-General Stopford, was set up in Rangoon; its staff being drawn partly from his old staff and partly from Fourteenth Army Headquarters. Henceforward, Lieut.-General Stopford was to command all land operations in or based on Burma. The forces under his command were: 4 Corps (consisting of 5, 17, and 19 Indian Divisions and 255 Indian Tank Brigade); 7 and 20 Indian Divisions; 268 Indian Infantry Brigade (under the command of 7 Indian Division); and a brigade of 2 British Division.[1] He also exercised direct operational control over 82 West African Division and 22 East African Brigade (both of which came directly under A.L.F.S.E.A. for all other purposes); and the Burma National Army.

573. On its formation, Twelfth Army was given the responsibility of mounting, from Rangoon, 5, 7, and 20 Indian Divisions, and numerous army, corps, and administrative units for ZIPPER and MAILFIST; and as from the 1st July it was to assume responsibility for all N.C.A.C. territory north of a line Mong Mit–Molo–Namhkam, and was to take over the remainder of the N.C.A.C. area as soon as all the Chinese troops had been withdrawn. (U.S. forces would remain responsible for the development and security of the Stilwell Road, and of the pipe-line into China). On the 30th May, I held a meeting in my Rear Headquarters at Delhi with the ZIPPER and MAILFIST Force Commanders, at which I approved the suggestion (which Lieut.-General Leese had discussed with me) that the military side of both operations should initially be directed by a single Corps headquarters (34 Corps); for I agreed that the elimination of the Army headquarters and of a second Corps headquarters in the early stages would ease the difficult shipping position, and allow the quickest possible build-up of men and material in the bridgehead. The initial naval and air operations were to be controlled by Flag Officer, Force 'W', and the Commodore Commanding Aircraft Carriers. The R.A.F. aircraft (as soon as these could be established ashore) would come under command of H.Q. 224 Group. It was decided to bring in Fourteenth Army Headquarters and 15 Corps Headquarters about D-plus-50; by which time two definite fronts would have been established, requiring individual attention from two Corps headquarters, with overall control by Army headquarters.

574. At this meeting with the Force Commanders, Lieut.-General Leese had made it clear that difficulties arising from the recent reduction in the qualifying period for PYTHON[2] which made it necessary to re-train and rehabilitate formations, would make it impossible to meet the late August D-Day for ZIPPER. On the 1st June, therefore, I informed the British and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff of this, saying that I had now decided on the 9th September as the new D-Day. On the 7th June, I received a telegram from the Secretary of State for War, the Right Hon. Sir James Grigg, in which he informed me, in common with other British theatre commanders, that there was to be a debate in the House of Commons on the 8th June, on the subject of welfare, leave, and PYTHON for the Army. In the course of this debate, he would announce, *inter alia*, that the qualifying period for PYTHON in the Far East was to be reduced forthwith from 3 years 8 months to 3 years 4 months;[3]

[1] 26 Indian Division and 254 Indian Tank Brigade were now withdrawn to India.

[2] The War Office scheme for repatriating troops who had served long periods overseas—under which the qualifying period had recently been reduced from four years to three years eight months.

[3] In the Air Force, it remained at 4 years (single) and 3 years (married). In the Navy, it remained at 3 years.

and that men in these ranges of service would be sent home "as shipping and other means of transportation offer, without waiting for their replacement, even in those areas where forces are being built-up rather than reduced".

575. On receiving this information I at once realised that, since the reduction to 3 years 8 months had already caused a postponement, a further reduction could not fail to have a paralysing effect on further operations in South-East Asia. It was imperative that I should take immediate action; and since time did not permit of detailed calculations (for the Debate was to take place on the following day), I confined my cursory examination to what I knew must be one of the worst bottlenecks: Signals personnel. It was at once clear that the number of Signals personnel who would have to be returned without relief was so great that ZIPPER would be jeopardised on that score alone.

576. Within three hours of receiving his telegram I was able to reply to the Secretary of State, as well as to the Chiefs of Staff, pointing this out. In my telegram to Sir James Grigg, I reminded him that, owing to the great difficulties already caused by PYTHON, LILOP, and LIAP[1] during the redeployment of our forces throughout the great distances of Burma and India, it had already been necessary to postpone the assault on Malaya by a fortnight. I stressed that it was not a question of causing us some inconvenience; but that unless we were authorised to handle this reduction on a gradual basis, to fit operational necessity, ZIPPER and MAILFIST would have to be further postponed—this time for an indefinite period which could not at this stage be calculated—pending detailed investigation by the C.-in-C. in India and C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A.

577. On the same day, Lieut.-General Leese telegraphed to the Secretary of State and to the Chiefs of Staff, from his Advanced Headquarters in Calcutta, in the same sense as I had; adding that unless wholesale use was made of the "operational necessity" clause (with consequent serious effect on morale, as a result of broken promises), the postponement of operations for some months (until replacements could be received and trained) was inevitable. General Auchinleck also telegraphed on the same day, and in the same sense as Lieut.-General Leese and myself; adding that if the qualifying period was reduced as the Secretary of State intended, he would not be able to handle the despatch home of the greatly increased numbers of officers and other ranks, while at the same time meeting my plans for future operations, which were now so far advanced. General Auchinleck suggested the insertion in Sir James Grigg's speech of the following:—

"'As shipping and other transportation facilities offer' carries another implication which I must in honesty ask Honourable Members to bear in mind. Active operations against the Japanese continue and will be vigorously pursued through the coming months. Operational needs are bound considerably to affect the availability of all means of transportation by land, sea, and air, within, to and from India. These requirements must come first. I therefore cannot pretend that there may not be many who may for operational reasons be delayed in their transit home; but this delay will be reduced to the minimum".

578. On the 9th June, I telegraphed to the Chiefs of Staff that I had invited C.-in-C. in India and C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A. to inform them at once of the full effect the announcement would have; and that I understood that our three telegrams, with preliminary reports, had reached London a few hours before the Debate in the House. It was now clear from these preliminary reports that the proposed announcement would immediately affect 32,300 British officers and other ranks, bringing the total to 83,500 for the next six months.[2] Since even the September D-Day entailed working to the narrowest possible margin, it seemed inevitable that this would mean indefinite postponement of ZIPPER and MAILFIST. I stressed the fact that the Secretary of State's announcement had been broadcast in the Far East the previous night without General Auchinleck's suggested amendment—and that its terms were now known to the majority of the officers and other ranks that it affected. Since morale, now that the war was over in Europe, was bound to be a difficult problem, I considered that it would be disastrous if extensive use were to be made of the "operational necessity" clause, or if the promise made by the Secretary of State were now to be qualified in any way.

579. I pointed out to the Chiefs of Staff that S.E.A.C. had carried on so far without substantial military reinforcements, and that CAPITAL and DRACULA had been completed without the six additional divisions which had generally been thought

[1] "Leave In Lieu Of PYTHON"; "Leave In Addition to PYTHON."
[2] On the 8th June, Air Chief Marshal Park informed me that he had had a severe cut in the R.A.F. ceiling, owing to the need for building up long-range bomber forces in the Pacific theatre; and that by the 1st August he would be 14,000 men short, including technicians.

to be necessary. We were prepared to carry out ZIPPER and MAILFIST without additional military forces; but I regretted that it was beyond our power to exploit our recent victories if, so far from receiving reinforcements now that the war in Europe was finished, we were instructed to return without relief what would now bring the total, to be returned on PYTHON alone before the 1st October, to one-third of the British officers and other ranks in S.E.A.C. and India Command—including the most experienced of these—before ZIPPER had begun.[1] I added that the repercussions on Indian transport, on shipping, and on the re-organisation of the Army in South-East Asia were so great, that I could not at present give even a rough estimate of the further delay which must result in my operations—although I feared it might prove very considerable. Finally, I assured the Chiefs of Staff that they could count on my doing everything in my power to minimise the effects of this blow, short of going back on the promise made to the troops by the Secretary of State for War. I had ordered investigation into every legitimate expedient that might enable us to carry on with the least possible postponement: but I could not hold out much hope.

580. I continued to exchange views by telegram with General Auchinleck and Lieut.-General Leese. The latter shared my strong views against any postponement of ZIPPER, and promised that he would do his best to overcome our new problems. He felt that the tactical situation was such, that we would gain great advantage by putting in ZIPPER on the 9th September; and he said that he was confident that the operation could still succeed if the commanders were prepared to accept a reduction in strength of some units and a hasty re-organisation of others. I entirely supported this view: for the longer we allowed the enemy to prepare, in Malaya and Singapore, the more difficult the assault would eventually be. And I felt that, if the operation had to be postponed, it should be postponed indefinitely, so that we could make quite sure that the ZIPPER force was fully up to its original strength, and capable of meeting the increased resistance which any postponement whatever would allow the enemy to build up.

581. It was the Secretary of State's opinion that the new PYTHON terms would not affect ZIPPER; and that, in any case, he had made due provision for invoking the "operational necessity" clause if necessary. General Auchinleck and I stated most emphatically that we were unwilling to invoke this clause on a large scale: for this would mean retaining officers and men who had learned that they were entitled to repatriation, but did not realise that they had no hope of returning home any sooner than they had had before the promise was made—unless ZIPPER were in fact cancelled, and the shipping diverted to implementing the PYTHON promise.

582. On the 14th June, I went to Rangoon for the Burma Victory Parade: and, while there, held discussions with the three Commanders-in-Chief, and with General Auchinleck's Chief of General Staff, Lieut.-General Sir John Swayne. It was decided that three courses lay open to us:—

(*a*) we could mount ZIPPER as previously planned, by invoking the "operational necessity" clause on a large scale: this we were not prepared to recommend; or

(*b*) we could remove from the ZIPPER force all officers and men due for repatriation[2] and mount a considerably reduced operation—even so, it would still be necessary to retain certain specialist officers and other ranks, under the "operational necessity" clause; or else

(*c*) we could carry out PYTHON in accordance with the policy announced by the Secretary of State, and postpone ZIPPER indefinitely.

We were all in favour of course (*b*), which Lieut.-General Leese, whom I instructed to take this matter up with the War Office direct, recommended. General Auchinleck and I suggested to the Chiefs of Staff that a further explanation by His Majesty's Government would be advisable, if the confidence of the troops in their commanders was not to be shaken; and we both volunteered to back up any such explanation with personal statements to our respective commands. We were informed, however, that His Majesty's Government was unwilling to make a further statement at this juncture, but might do so at a later date.

583. In the meantime, I was authorised to carry out ZIPPER on the 9th September, under the terms of course (*b*); and with this assurance I directed Lieut.-General Leese to go ahead with his plan. He and I were agreed that the "operational necessity" clause should be invoked as little as possible, and that the commanders must be urged to take all possible steps

[1] The proportion was high in South-East Asia because exceptionally large numbers of British reinforcements had been sent to the Far East after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December, 1941; and it was precisely these that the new qualifying terms affected.

[2] Although even if these were withdrawn from operations it would not be possible to transport them to the United Kingdom at once, and they would have to remain in India and Burma inactive while the assault on Malaya was taking place, I felt that this was better than asking them to take part in an assault and campaign after their "time was up" in S.E.A.C.

to grapple with the difficulties that would now face them. For it was vital that no consideration could be held to justify a further postponement of ZIPPER beyond the September D-Day now agreed. In the event, the Japanese were to surrender before ZIPPER could be carried out: so the precise effect of the drastic reduction in strength of the greatest amphibious operation planned in South-East Asia must remain a matter for conjecture. What is certain is that the forces with which we were eventually asked to assault Malaya were reduced by the equivalent of one British division; that the strength and efficiency of the Signals and other essential ancillary services were gravely impaired; and that many units suffered a large-scale withdrawal of experienced personnel, and were asked to operate with replacements of comparatively inexperienced British officers and N.C.O.s.

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On the 1st June, all U.S. air force units, including the 10th U.S.A.A.F. and the American components of Eastern Air Command, were withdrawn from S.E.A.C.;[1] and this necessitated a complete re-organisation of the air forces remaining in the Command. Eastern Air Command Headquarters was now disbanded, and for the time being all R.A.F. formations and units that had been under Lieut.-General Stratemeyer's[2] command were taken over by R.A.F. Burma Headquarters,[3] which was now greatly expanded. Most of the British staff of Eastern Air Command were absorbed in this enlarged Headquarters, which remained at Calcutta under Air Marshal Sir Alec Coryton to control all air operations in Burma. Strategic Air Force, Combat Cargo Task Force and Photographic Reconnaissance Force were also disbanded on the 1st June. R.A.F. Burma Headquarters moved to Rangoon in the middle of August, when Air Marshal Sir Hugh Saunders assumed command. 232 Group Headquarters, which had commanded the British component of C.C.T.F., now took over full control of all R.A.F. transport units operating in support of the Burma operations, while the R.A.F. element of Photographic Reconnaissance Force was re-formed into 347 Wing.

585. All these formations, together with 221 Group, in command of which Air Vice-Marshal C. A. Bouchier succeeded Air Vice-Marshal Vincent on the 12th June, came temporarily under the command of H.Q. R.A.F. Burma; but Air Chief Marshal Park made plans for the further re-organisation which would be necessary when the campaign in Burma came to an end and operation ZIPPER began. When that happened, 224 Group (which would have returned from India), 347 Wing, all Special Duties squadrons, and 231 and 232 Groups would come directly under his own operational control; and the commitments of H.Q. R.A.F. Burma would be correspondingly reduced. Most of the air units allotted to ZIPPER, after re-organisation in India and Northern Burma, would move down to Southern Burma, which would be the main air base in the early stages of the assault: and H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A. accordingly undertook a programme of airfield construction at Mingaladon, Toungoo, and elsewhere as required by Air Command.

586. With the withdrawal of 224 Group, the transfer to China of all the U.S. air units, and the need to give as many squadrons as possible an opportunity for rest and maintenance, air activity would now be on a greatly reduced scale. Only 221 Group would be available for close support to the land forces during the monsoon; and air-supply would be provided on a small scale by eight transport squadrons based on all-weather airfields at Chittagong, Akyab and Kyaukpyu (the two last-named having recently been completed). The air forces in Burma were given the tasks of providing support to the land forces, and evacuating casualties; providing air-supply; and undertaking photographic reconnaissance. The difficulty of operating with few aircraft, under monsoon conditions and with no all-weather airfield in the forward areas, over a long front—for 4 Corps was stretched over more than 150 miles—was mitigated to some extent by the fact that the front was comparatively static, and that Group Headquarters was consequently largely able to judge in advance, from experience, where air-support was most likely to be needed. Even so, the aircraft of 221 Group were all based on Meiktila, Kinmagan, and (when these airfields were completed) on Mingaladon and Toungoo—the first three of which were at a considerable distance from the coming battle: so that the time elapsing between a demand for air-support and the actual strike was in many cases to be a great disadvantage.

587. In the operations which now followed—and which were on a small scale, not only because of the monsoon and the reduction in our air strength, but because the mounting of ZIPPER and MAILFIST were

[1] See 'B', paragraph 568.

[2] Lieut-General Stratemeyer had recently been promoted, on my personal recommendation to General of the Army Arnold.

[3] H.Q. R.A.F. Bengal/Burma had been divided in February, 1945, into 228 Group (under the command of Base Air Forces, South-East Asia, at Delhi) and H.Q. R.A.F. Burma.

receiving over-riding priority—the Twelfth Army was given the following tasks:—

(a) to prosecute the war against the enemy in Burma;

(b) to take over the operational and administrative responsibilities for liberated Burmese territory; and

(c) to enforce internal security, and maintain law and order.

These tasks entailed, in particular, the destruction of those Japanese forces which had been by-passed by the rapid advance from Mandalay to Rangoon; the reconquest of the Tenasserim Civil Division,[1] and of all those parts of Burma which were still in enemy hands; and the early introduction of Civil Affairs Service (Burma), together with the preliminary re-forming of the regular Burma Army.[2] The tasks of 4 Corps remained much as before:—

(a) to patrol into the Pegu Yomas, to harry the enemy and block his escape routes to the east.

(b) to advance up the Meiktila–Taunggyi and Toungoo–Mawchi roads; and

(c) to carry out offensive and defensive operations in the Pegu area, on the western bank of the Sittang.

588. Throughout June, mopping-up and patrolling were carried out on the Prome–Rangoon axis and in the Pegu Yomas. Fighting at the Zalon bridgehead had finished with its final liquidation, and the troops which had been engaged there were now being used further south. 7 Indian Division, with 268 Indian Infantry Brigade under command, was now allotted the northern sector of the front, which stretched from Prome to Shwedaung; while the southern sector, stretching from Shwedaung to Hmawbi, was given to 20 Indian Division. Air-support was provided by squadrons of 221 Group, which struck at the enemy in the Yomas, and at the same time did useful work in notifying the ground forces of the escape routes that he was using. The pilots concentrated mainly on strafing troop concentrations, paying special attention to transport—which had now come down, in the main to bullock-carts, pack animals, and even to elephants which the Japanese took from the teak forests. Though the casualties could not be estimated (not even, as we subsequently discovered, by the enemy himself), it was learned from various sources that these operations were causing considerable damage and disruption.

589. During June, the Burma National Army (which was becoming quite skilled in guerrilla warfare) began to operate in regular co-ordination with our units and formations, and took part in several successful actions against the retreating enemy in the Sittang valley and in the hills to the east. Giving close support to the guerrilla forces, 221 Group flew three offensive patrols daily—at dawn, mid-day, and dusk—which carried out many strikes on troop concentrations, headquarters, and dumps in conjunction with guerrilla parties, who signalled accurate and up-to-date locations of suitable targets to the aircraft engaged, and afterwards reported the results obtained. Monsoon conditions were particularly hampering to photographic reconnaissance pilots, who usually had to operate with the cloud base at less than 1,000 feet above ground level. Much of this work had to be done over the Yomas and the hills east of the Sittang; and the Mawchi road was more often than not completely swathed in cloud. Nevertheless, much valuable tactical reconnaissance was done: which, although it was usually of a negative nature operationally—for the Japanese had maintained, and even perfected, their skill in concealment—produced much useful topographical information.[3]

590. In the southern sector of the front, and particularly in the area to the east of Letpadan and Tharrawaddy, the enemy remained aggressive in the first half of June, carrying out several raiding and foraging expeditions; but 20 Indian Division had put a stop to this by the end of the month. It was becoming clear that General Kimura's object was to extricate the remnants of his forces and concentrate them around Moulmein and in Siam. Fifteenth and Thirty-third Japanese Armies, which were east of the Meiktila–Rangoon road, and therefore secure from flank and rear attacks, stood a fair chance of extricating themselves; but the position of Twenty-eighth Japanese Army, which was still to the west of the Sittang, and to a large extent still to the west even of the Irrawaddy, was more precarious. If it attempted to break out to the east, it would face attacks by our forces along the axis of the Irrawaddy: as well as by the whole strength of 4 Corps (which was now being re-disposed along the Taungoo–Pegu road); and finally, by the Burma National Army and parties of Force 136, which were

[1] See Map 37 (facing page 196).

[2] See 'C', paragraphs 79, 80, 83 and 84.

[3] Responsibility for the overall presentation of topographical information was vested in the Inter-Service Topographical Department. This had started in India as an outpost of the main I.S.T.D. at Oxford, whose task was "the collection, collation and publication of topographical information on any part of the world, as required by the Joint Planning Staff". It was developed in South-East Asia, though under great difficulties, and proved to be invaluable.

operating on both banks of the Sittang and in the hills to the east.

591. The supply position of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army was almost desperate. It had no overland communication with the Burma Area Army at Moulmein; and its forces, who had no hope of obtaining fighting equipment, medical supplies, or reinforcements, suffered increasingly from hunger, sickness, and exhaustion; although to a certain extent they were able to live off the country. In spite of the difficulty of its position, however, the morale of the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army remained high, and an intensive campaign of "surrender leaflet" dropping failed to persuade many of the troops to give themselves up. We therefore concluded that the Army commander was planning an organised break-out of such remnants as he could control—and our assumption proved to be correct. By the end of June, mainly owing to the painstaking and accurate work of 'V' Force patrols, we had obtained a fairly comprehensive picture of enemy locations and plans in the Pegu Yomas; and there was now no doubt that the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army was contemplating a break-out in force, eastward across the Yomas and the Sittang, and that as a preliminary to this it was concentrating in the western foothills—which were densely wooded, and crossed by only a few tracks, and provided a suitable and secure area for the purpose.

592. On the 4th July, one of our patrols captured a 55 Japanese Divisional operation order, dated the 10th June, which gave a complete picture of the unit composition and strength of this division; its break-out routes; and the areas east of the Sittang where the division hoped to re-assemble. These details agreed in almost every particular with Intelligence reports already obtained; 17 Indian Division, which was holding the sector in which the break-out of 55 Japanese Division was due to take place, was consequently forewarned. 4 Corps sent patrols into the hills to the west; but in general the enemy were too far for contact to be easily made. But these patrols often ran across Japanese reconnaissance parties, who for their part were trying to discover what plans and dispositions we were making to meet their intended break-out—and these parties provided us with prisoners from whom much useful information was obtained.

593. In the early part of July, there was sporadic fighting at many points on the 4 Corps front, and our Intelligence patrols continued to gather information about the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army's dispositions and intentions. It was estimated that the strength of the forces which would take part in the break-out was between 6,500 and 9,500,[1] and it was known for certain that these forces had now been split up into five distinct groups, assembled well back in the hills between a point west of Toungoo and a point west of Nyaunglebin. From north to south, the groups consisted of: 54 Japanese Division; 72 Independent Mixed Brigade; Twenty-eighth Army H.Q. and miscellaneous troops; two regiments of 55 Japanese Division; and 105 Independent Mixed Brigade (with remnants of the late Rangoon garrison). The enemy was planning to break out across the Rangoon–Toungoo road, crossing at various points on a front of 150 miles, between Toungoo in the north and Nyaunglebin in the south: in a movement corresponding more or less with their alignment in the assembly areas. 4 Corps therefore sited strong ambushes and patrols at vital points on the Rangoon–Toungoo road, and in the flat country between the road and the Sittang.

594. It was imperative that 4 Corps should be kept up to strength; and at the end of June Lieut.-General Stopford brought 7 Indian Division from the Irrawaddy valley to reinforce the Corps in the Pegu area. With a view to siting the necessary ambushes and patrols, the Corps was now re-disposed in three sectors. In the north, one brigade of 19 Indian Division held positions from Toungoo down to (but excluding) Pyu; another brigade was in the Pyinmana area, on the Rangoon–Mandalay road, north of Toungoo; while the third operated on the Mawchi road. In the centre, 17 Indian Division[2] was deployed between Pyu and Payagyi; while in the south 7 Indian Division was in contact with the enemy in the area of the Sittang Old Channel. This area was held by the Thirty-third Japanese Army, which had in the middle of June staged an unsuccessful counter-attack, designed to divert the attention of 4 Corps from the eastern exits from the Yomas, through which the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army was planning to break out.

595. Increased enemy activity around the Sittang Old Channel had been anticipated when patrols of Thirty-third Japanese Army formations had crossed to the west bank of the Sittang and probed 4 Corps' defences around Pegu; and preparations had been made to meet the expected counter-attack. But the disposition and supply of troops in the flat country

[1] After the Surrender, it was learned that the correct figure was around 20,000, of which about 1,000 were sick, and unable to take part in the break-out operation.

[2] Strengthened by four battalions, from 20 Indian Division, which had been brought across from the Irrawaddy axis.

west of the Sittang was not an easy matter; for the ground was largely flooded by the monsoon rains, and it was overlooked by high ground on the east bank, which was held by the Japanese. In the second half of June the Thirty-third Japanese Army counter-attacked with 18 and 53 Japanese Divisions. Small parties crossed the Sittang and established themselves at various points on the west bank, from where they carried out sporadic attacks on our forward positions. 18 Japanese Division then made serious attempts to eliminate our positions in the area west of Sittang Old Channel; where 7 Indian Division had by this time taken over from 5 Indian Division.[1]

596. By early July, 18 Japanese Division had surrounded Nyaungkashe, cutting the only reliable land line of communication between the forward positions of 7 Indian Division and the main body. On the 7th, it was decided that the tactical importance of this village would not warrant the steady attrition of our troops that would be the cost of holding it; and the forward troops of the division were withdrawn that night. In the Myitkyo area, further north, there was also bitter hand-to-hand fighting with troops of 53 Japanese Division, which was making a determined attempt to reach the line of the Pegu–Sittang canal. Here again, it was decided that Myitkyo was not worth the casualties that it would take to hold it; and the village was abandoned. By the middle of July the counter-attack weakened. The enemy had achieved little by these thrusts; and his casualties from ground and air attacks had been very heavy. From now on, he confined himself to patrolling with small parties in the Nyaungkashe and Myitkyo areas: and as he proceeded to withdraw the greater part of his counter-attack forces across the river, the "Battle of the Sittang Bend" came to an end.

597. The counter-attack had not succeeded in diverting 4 Corps from its preparations to meet Twenty-eighth Japanese Army's break-out from the Pegu Yomas. In the central and northern sectors, which were held by 17 Indian Division and 19 Indian Division respectively, there had been little activity during June; but it was known that the Japanese were slipping small parties (mainly by night) across the Rangoon–Mandalay road and across the Sittang, from Twenty-eighth Japanese Army's forces in the Yomas. With the number of troops at his disposal, the temporary Corps Commander, Lieut.-General F. I. S. Tuker[2] was not in a position to establish an unbroken cordon along the line of the main road; and in any case the weather made movement extremely difficult, and restricted operations to a few well-defined areas. The Japanese suffered from the same difficulty: but could manage to elude our vigilance by moving at night—when it was almost impossible to intercept them unless our troops happened to find themselves precisely on a line of escape.

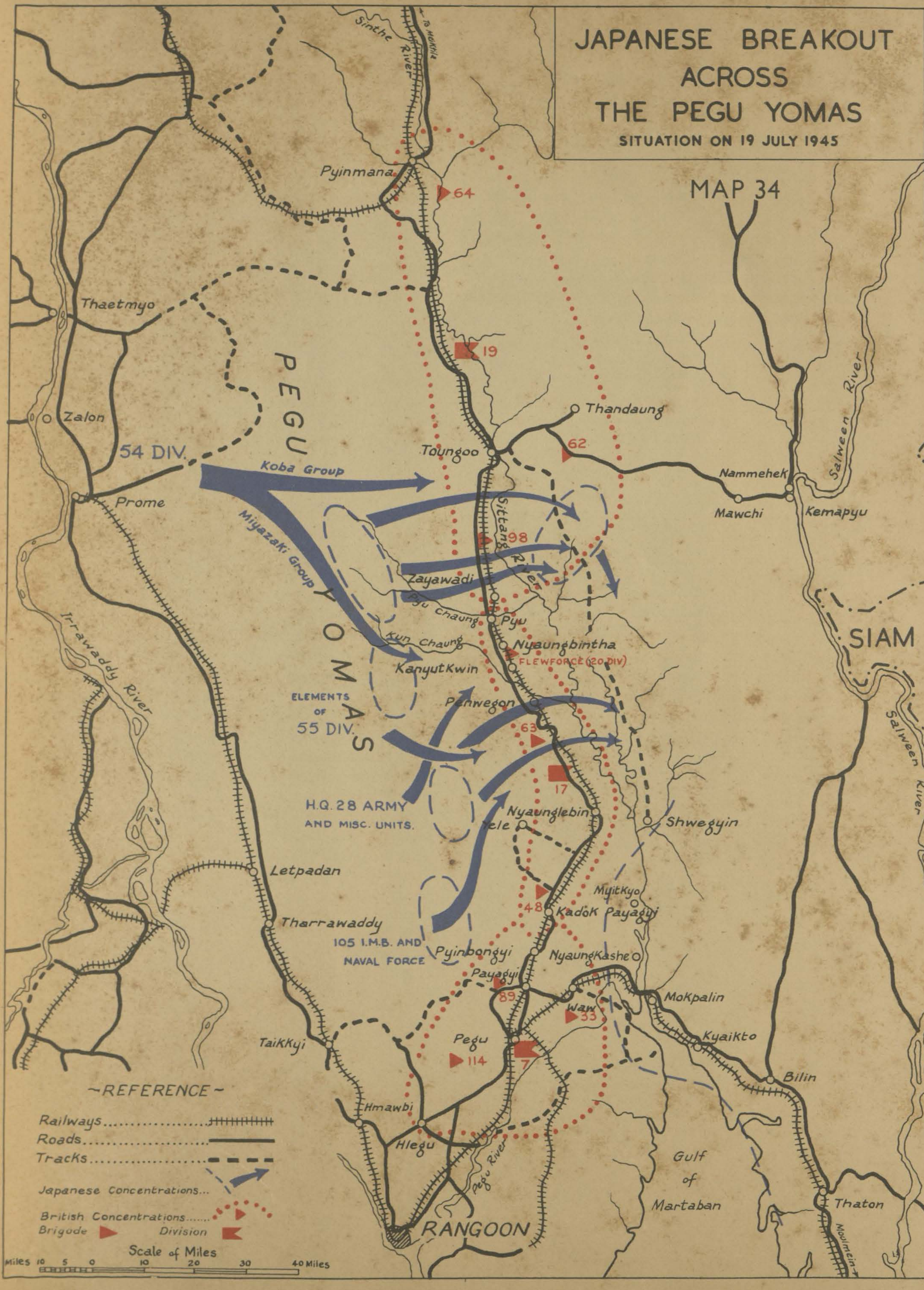
598. As the monsoon rains increased, our troops found it more and more difficult to move across country; while movement off the road became impossible for all vehicles. Patrols had to move through water, often more than waist-high; and in some places, owing to their small stature, it was not possible to use Gurkha units at all. As a result, we were frequently prevented from carrying out operations which would have been perfectly feasible under normal conditions; but to compensate for the restriction on infantry operations, the artillery sited on and near the main road made special efforts to shell known and likely escapes route and crossing-points. Information gathered from captured documents, prisoners' statements, and ground Intelligence reports all indicated that the 20th July would be D-Day for the break-out of Twenty-eighth Japanese Army: the first sign occurred on the 19th, when a unit of 17 Indian Division was attacked by about 100 Japanese, to the north of Nyaunglebin—and the break-out began on the following day.[3]

599. On all three sectors of the 4 Corps front parties of Japanese, each of them about 500 strong, emerged from their forming-up areas in the Yomas and attempted to cross the Rangoon–Mandalay road. For the next two weeks, the Twenty-eighth Japanese Army, which appeared to have no alternative plan, persisted (with typical single-mindedness and regularity of method) in the same tactic, using the same routes almost continuously. Since the Army headquarters was cut off from most of the formations and units under its command, the troops very short of food and ammunition, and without wheeled transport of any kind—the organisation of an extensive operation was a creditable performance. But it was doomed to fail: for the enemy had not realised that we had so accurately appreciated his intentions, having assumed that the weather would have prevented our undertaking large-scale air reconnaissance. He had therefore calculated that a rapid, organised break-out might have a good chance of being partially successful.

[1] Which was due to be withdrawn to India, to prepare for ZIPPER.

[2] Lieut.-General Tuker, who had previously been General-Officer-Commanding, Ceylon Army Command, acted as 4 Corps Commander from 14th July to 18th August, 1945, during the absence of Lieut.-General Messervy on leave.

[3] See Map 34.



JAPANESE BREAKOUT ACROSS THE PEGU YOMAS
SITUATION ON 19 JULY 1945
MAP 34
PEGU YOMAS
54 DIV.
Koba Group
Miyazaki Group
ELEMENTS OF 55 DIV.
H.Q. 28 ARMY AND MISC. UNITS.
105 I.M.B. AND NAVAL FORCE
FLEWFORCE (20 DIV)
64
19
62
98
63
17
48
89
33
114
7
Pyinmana
Thaetmyo
Zalon
Prome
Toungoo
Thandaung
Nammehek
Mawchi
Kemapyu
Zayawadi
Pyu Chaung
Pyu
Kun Chaung
Nyaungbintha
KanyutKwin
Penwegon
Nyaunglebin
Yele
Shwegyin
Letpadan
Tharrawaddy
Myitkyo
Kadok
Payagyi
Pyinbongyi
NyaungKashe
Waw
Mokpalin
Kyaikto
Bilin
Thaton
Pegu
TaikKyi
Hmawbi
Hlegu
RANGOON
SIAM
Sinthe River
Sittang River
Irrawaddy River
Salween River
Pegu River
Gulf of Martaban
to Meiktila
Moulmein
~REFERENCE~
Railways
Roads
Tracks
Japanese Concentrations
British Concentrations
Brigade
Division
Scale of Miles
Miles 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 Miles

600. The Japanese found, however, that 4 Corps was operating from prepared positions; and that it was provided with adequate supplies of food and ammunition; was equipped with armoured vehicles and artillery; and could count on air-supply and on close support from 221 Group. The Corps was disposed in depth as well as in strength: its forward units could engage the Japanese even before they could reach the road; on the road itself, the main strength of the Corps (with static positions, mobile parties of infantry and armour, and well-sited artillery positions) formed a second barrier; while those Japanese who did manage to cross the road, and to escape the harrying fire of 221 Group and artillery, into the paddy-fields beyond, finally found themselves faced with having to cross the Sittang under fire from parties of Force 136 and the Burma National Army. (The crossing of the Sittang, in fact, was the most difficult stage in the escape; for the river craft provided excellent targets for ambushes and R.A.F. patrols—and since, characteristically, the Japanese tended to use the same crossing-points several times, we were able to dispose ambushes and interception parties with great effect.)

601. 221 Group continued to work in close co-operation with Force 136 and the "Patriot Burmese Forces" (for the Burma National Army was so renamed on the 23rd July)[1]: carrying out reconnaissance of enemy positions for the guerrillas, and attacking targets which the latter located and indicated to them. By this time, small guerrilla units had been organised in almost all the villages of Southern Burma. Whenever the Japanese moved in small bodies they were in danger of being ambushed, and it was only by moving in large parties that they could hope to outnumber and outfight elements of the local Resistance movement. If the enemy had been able to slip unobtrusively, in small parties, through friendly or even neutral country, throughout May and June, without having concentrated for a mass break-out, far greater numbers would have succeeded in escaping.

602. The "Battle of the Break-out" was a disaster for the Japanese. By the 4th August, most of the few who had been fortunate enough to run the gauntlet successfully, had reached the east bank of the Sittang; and after that date there was hardly any more fighting. Between the 20th July and the 4th August, the enemy lost 6,271 killed and counted (of whom 3,200 were claimed by the guerrillas); while our own casualties in the same period were 95 killed and 322 wounded. The battle had been notable for the number of Japanese taken prisoner: 740. On the 24th July alone, when 829 of the enemy were killed on the 4 Corps front, 122 prisoners had been taken: a proportion of one in seven, compared with that of one in a hundred in the early days of 1944.

603. 221 Group had made this battle its main effort in the monsoon campaign. At this time, the Group consisted of four squadrons of Thunderbolts (P-47), two squadrons of Mosquitos, four squadrons of Spitfires (each fitted with one 500-lb. bomb when used as fighter-bombers), one squadron of Hurricanes for tactical reconnaissance, and one flight of light inter-communication aircraft (L-5). Towards the end of the battle it had been possible to transfer the Thunderbolt squadrons from Meiktila to the newly-completed all-weather strips at Zayatkwin in the Rangoon area, which were much nearer to the battle-front. It is likely that the 2,000 of the enemy, which it was estimated that the pilots of 221 Group had killed in the fortnight of fighting, were under-estimated, for many air-attack victims must have died of wounds, exhaustion and hunger in the jungle, or else have drowned in the Sittang. By now, the Japanese armies in Burma were fatally weakened and disintegrated; and the campaign was virtually at an end.

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## Fleet Operations During 1945

The submarine threat in the Indian Ocean had been practically eliminated by the end of 1944, and in the early months of 1945 the destroyers of the newly-christened East Indies Fleet were being used mainly against enemy supply shipping and shore-bases in the Andaman Islands. In December, 1944, the reconstituted fleet had carried out its first operation: an air-strike on oil, railway and harbour installations at Belawan Deli, in Sumatra (Operation ROBSON).[2] Early in January, an air-strike was made on oil refineries at Pangkalan Brandan, also in Sumatra (Operation LENTIL),[3] and towards the end of the month a strike was carried out in two phases on

[1] This Burmese Force had four different names before the remnants were finally absorbed by the Burma Regular Army These were:—Early 1942, Burma Independence Army; August, 1942, Burma Defence Army; March, 1945, Burma National Army; 23rd July, 1945, Patriot Burmese Forces.

[2] By the fleet carriers INDOMITABLE, ILLUSTRIOUS; the cruisers NEWCASTLE, BLACK PRINCE and ARGONAUT; and 7 destroyers, under command of Rear-Admiral (later Admiral) Sir Philip Vian (Rear-Admiral, Aircraft Carriers). The fleet carrier INDEFATIGABLE and the battleship KING GEORGE V had also joined the fleet but did not take part in this operation.

[3] By the fleet carriers INDOMITABLE, VICTORIOUS, INDEFATIGABLE; the cruisers SUFFOLK, CEYLON, ARGONAUT and BLACK PRINCE; and 9 destroyers.

important oil refineries at Palembang (Operation MERIDIAN).[1] At this point, the modern battleships, the fleet carriers, and a proportion of cruisers and destroyers sailed to join the British Pacific Fleet; and, at the beginning of February, the East Indies Fleet was left without a single aircraft carrier. Later in the month, however, the 21st Aircraft Carrier Squadron, which consisted of escort carriers, began to arrive on the station. In the same month, certain installations at Port Blair (Andaman Islands) were bombarded and the Radar station on Great Coco Island (north-east of the Andaman Islands) was shelled.

605. The Japanese South-West Area Fleet, having taken part in the Leyte operations in October, was disbanded subsequently, and the surviving units were recommissioned as the Japanese 10th Area Fleet, which remained based on Singapore. In February, Field-Marshal Terauchi was given full operational control of all naval forces in the area of the Japanese Expeditionary Forces in the Southern Regions—these having until now been directly controlled by Imperial General Headquarters.[2] The Commander-in-Chief of the new fleet became the supreme Japanese naval commander in South-East Asia, responsible for detailed planning of all naval and naval air operations decided on at Field-Marshal Terauchi's Headquarters.

606. Our own detailed planning was hampered, at this time, by lack of adequate maps of the Kra Isthmus, the Malay Peninsula, and the Netherlands East Indies; and in order to make good this deficiency, the East Indies Fleet undertook a series of photogaphic reconnaissances in these areas—which, even after the capture of Rangoon were to remain beyond the range of land-based Photographic Reconnaissance Aircraft. A limited amount of photographic reconnaissance was being undertaken by Super-Fortresses (B-29) of U.S. 20th Bomber Command; but this covered only a small part of what we required for planning for ZIPPER. From February onwards, therefore, the burden of photographic reconnaissance fell on the fleet, which carried out several operations for this purpose. The first operation of this kind took place between the 26th February and the 4th March, when photographic reconnaissance of the Kra Isthmus, Penang, the north-eastern coast of Sumatra, and Simalur and Banjak Islands was carried out (Operation STACEY).[3] In the second week of April, photographic reconnaissance of the Port Swettenham–Port Dickson area was carried out, while at the same time anti-shipping strikes and bombardments were carried out as a cover plan (Operation SUNFISH).[4] The battleships and one cruiser bombarded Sabang, while four destroyers[5] bombarded Uleelhoe, on the mainland opposite. An airstrike was also made against Emmahaven, which resulted in several hits on a 4,000-ton merchant ship, and the destruction of marine workshops and a number of aircraft on the ground.

607. At the end of April and in the first days of May, all available units of the fleet were used in support of DRACULA.[6] On the 4th May, the Carrier Force, having completed their close air-support of the operations, finally carried out a number of air-strikes along the Tenasserim coast between Mergui and Victoria Point, before returning to base. The Covering Force of battleships, carriers, cruisers and destroyers, returned to Trincomalee on the 9th, having carried out bombardments and air-strikes against the Andamans and Nicobars. At no time during these naval supporting operations had any enemy opposition been encountered. On the 10th, two of our submarines patrolling in the Straits of Malacca reported a Japanese cruiser of the Nachi class proceeding north-westward, escorted by one destroyer. Vice-Admiral Walker immediately sailed with Force 61[7]; on the morning of the 12th, two enemy ships were reported on a southerly course, and in order to avoid being sighted Force 61 proceeded to a position about 200 miles south-west of Achin Head, in Northern Sumatra. On the 13th, Force 62 (consisting of the cruiser NIGERIA and 4 destroyers) was sent from Trincomalee to reinforce Force 61.

608. On the 15th May information was received in the early morning that a small Japanese convoy was in the Andaman Sea, steering south. 26th Destroyer Flotilla was detached to intercept; and was followed some hours later by RICHELIEU and one cruiser of

[1] By the fleet carriers INDOMITABLE, INDEFATIGABLE, VICTORIOUS and ILLUSTRIOUS: as well as the battleship KING GEORGE V; the cruisers BLACK PRINCE, ARGONAUT, EURYALUS and CEYLON; and 11 destroyers.

[2] See 'A', paragraph 80 and 'B', paragraph 564.

[3] By the escort carriers EMPRESS and AMEER; the cruiser KENYA; and 3 destroyers, under command of Vice-Admiral H. T. C. Walker (Vice-Admiral Commanding 3rd Battle Squadron).

[4] By the battleships QUEEN ELIZABETH and RICHELIEU (the latter having returned from refitting in Europe in March, to replace the RENOWN); the escort carriers EMPEROR and KHEDIVE; the cruisers LONDON and CUMBERLAND; and 5 destroyers.

[5] Of 26th Destroyer Flotilla which had arrived in March to fill the gap left by the gradual transfer of 7th Destroyer Flotilla to the Pacific.

[6] See 'B', paragraphs 542 and 543 and Chart C (pages 148 and 149).

[7] Consisting of the battleships QUEEN ELIZABETH (Flagship of Vice-Admiral H. T. C. Walker, commanding 3rd Battle Squadron and Force 61) and RICHELIEU; the cruisers CUMBERLAND (Flagship of Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson, commanding 5th Cruiser Squadron), ROYALIST (Flagship of Commodore G. N. Oliver, commanding 21st Aircraft Carrier Squadron) and TROMP; the escort carriers HUNTER, KHEDIVE, SHAH and EMPEROR; and 9 destroyers.

Force 61, while later still Force 62 also joined. About mid-day, an enemy cruiser and destroyer (later identified as the HAGURO and KAMIKAZE, respectively) were sighted by aircraft of SHAH and 222 Group; and Operation DUKEDOM[1] began. During the afternoon three Avengers (Torpedo Bomber Reconnaissance) carried out a gallant, unsupported bombing attack, but scored no hits: meanwhile, 26th Destroyer Flotilla was steaming at high speed to intercept, with the remainder of the fleet proceeding at best speed in support. Just before midnight, after steaming 330 miles at 27 knots, 26th Destroyer Flotilla obtained radar contact with the enemy at 78,000 yards[2]; and, after manoeuvring for position, attacked with torpedoes and sank the cruiser HAGURO at 0115 on the 16th, about 45 miles south-west of Penang. The destroyer KAMIKAZE escaped after being damaged by gun-fire.

609. During this action one of our destroyers sustained five casualties, and had one boiler-room put out of action: our ships suffered no other casualties or damage. The sinking of HAGURO is an outstanding example of a night attack by destroyers: having myself commanded a destroyer flotilla during the first two years of the war, I was able to appreciate the magnificent performance of Captain (D) 26[3] and his flotilla in locating and sinking such a powerful ship[4] of the Japanese fleet, so close to one of its own bases. After Operation DUKEDOM, Vice-Admiral Walker concentrated his force to the north of Sumatra, and sent out reconnaissance flights southward into the Straits of Malacca. The completion of DUKEDOM marked the end of an exceptionally active period for the fleet: 26th Destroyer Flotilla, for example, having been at sea for thirty-six days out of forty-three.

610. At the end of May an anti-shipping sweep was carried out in the Andamans area (Operation ADOPTION); and in June, another was carried out in the Sabang area (Operation IRREGULAR); while in June also, a second photographic reconnaissance operation (BALSAM)[5] was undertaken, to obtain further important data for the planning of ZIPPER. During the latter operation, air-strikes were carried out in the north-eastern Sumatra area, as a cover plan. In July, two major minesweeping operations (COLLIE and LIVERY) were carried out. The object of the first of these was to provoke the enemy to action, and wear down his air strength; with the secondary object of misleading him as to the exact location of our planned assault on the Malay Peninsula. Mines were swept off Car Nicobar, while gun positions and other targets on the island were bombarded. In the second operation, mines were swept near Phuket Island, while our aircraft carried out strikes against the Kra Isthmus. It was during Operation LIVERY that the first Japanese suicide-plane attacks were made, in South-East Asia. Another battleship, the NELSON, had arrived on the station in July: but had not taken part in operations by the time of the Japanese surrender.

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### LONG-RANGE AIR OPERATIONS DURING 1945

611. In December, 1944, in preparation for the major operations that would take place early in 1945, training of the Strategic Air Force had been intensified; and its operational activities reduced accordingly. But in January, when its training was completed and it had been reinforced with another Liberator (B-24) squadron, it was again able to embark on an extensive programme of tactical and long-range operations. In the first ten days of the New Year, intensive attacks were carried out against all lines of communication between Burma and Siam; and for the remainder of the month the main weight of attack was on enemy airfields—so as to neutralise the enemy's attempts to interfere with our air-supply. At the end of January the Strategic Air Force concentrated on directly supporting Fourteenth Army and 221 Group in their drive towards the Irrawaddy, and 15 Corps and 224 Group in their Arakan operations. Two strikes were also carried out on the Burma–Siam railway.

612. Mine-laying operations by Strategic Air Force and 222 Group were now stepped up; and almost all the important harbours, straits, and river anchorages that the enemy used for transporting supplies to his overland lines of communication, were to a large extent neutralised. With the virtual disappearance of the enemy submarine threat, Air Command was able, from January, 1945, to decentralise the control that had been vested in the Indian Ocean General Reconnaissance Operations organisation[6] and to allow 222 Group to concentrate on mine-laying and on other independent offensive operations. On the 1st February, General Arnold put the U.S. 20th Bomber Command under my operational control for carrying out long-range strategic operations; and Brig.-General R. M. Ramey (who commanded the formation and was now

[1] See Chart D, pages 176 and 177.
[2] This remarkable range was due to anomalous propagation. The Radar operator who reported it was disbelieved at first but "insisted to the point of insubordination" that it was the enemy.
[3] Captain M. L. Power, R.N.
[4] The HAGURO was one of the largest cruisers, displacing 15,000 tons: armed with ten 8-inch and eight 5-inch guns and four 24-inch torpedo tubes; and carried three float-planes.
[5] By the escort carriers STALKER, KHEDIVE and AMEER; the cruisers ROYALIST and SUFFOLK; and 5 destroyers.
[6] IOGROPS; see 'A', paragraphs 34 and 35.

under Major-General Stratemeyer) reported to me at Kandy for orders.[1] I saw him with my Acting Allied Air C.-in-C., Air Marshal Garrod, who arranged to delegate control of the Command's operations to Major-General Stratemeyer. These one hundred Super-Fortresses (B-29) remained under my operational control until April, when they were sent to Guam to take part in strikes against Japan: in this short space of time they did excellent work against targets beyond the range of the Strategic Air Force[2] and particularly in long-range mine-laying, which I specially called for, against such distant targets as Singapore, Saigon and Camranh Bay.[3]

613. In February, before the attack on Meiktila, the heavy bombers of the Strategic Air Force concentrated on attacking dumps and military installations, enemy headquarters, and troop concentrations —while making a particular point of keeping the Burma–Siam railway and its parallel road out of use. At this time, also, the Strategic Air Force had managed to paralyse the enemy's network of airfields in Central and Southern Burma; and had staged a heavy and successful strike with thirty-nine Liberators (B-24) on Mingaladon airfield, which the enemy was using as a reinforcement base for his forward airfields, on the 28th February—the day on which the assault on Meiktila began. As a result of our precursory strikes on the enemy's airfields, our ground forces had met with no interference from the air during the advance on Meiktila and the actual assault on the town.

614. Until about this time, the enemy had been in control of an extensive network of roads, railways and rivers in Central and Southern Burma, along which he had been able to move supplies and troops with comparative ease. Three times—in September, 1944, December, 1944, and January, 1945—Lieut.-General Kimura had been able to re-dispose his three armies, and these movements had been carried out with remarkable efficiency and speed, considering the extent to which we had bombed his communications beforehand. On the 1st March, the scope and power of 224 Group's activities were increased by the employment of the U.S. 1st and 2nd Air Commandos, who, though not under direct control of Air Vice-Marshal Bandon, nevertheless operated with 224 Group. With these valuable reinforcements, and with the aircraft at his disposal which our success in Arakan had enabled him to switch to long-range operations, he now organised attacks on dumps and enemy headquarters in Central and Southern Burma—and in particular, against enemy lines of communication in these areas.[4]

615. During March, therefore, great care was taken to keep the Rangoon–Mandalay railway permanently cut, and to see that as far as possible the key bridges at Thawatti, Pyinmana, and Sinthe remained unserviceable. But the enemy continued to display the remarkable aptitude that he had shown throughout the campaign, in contriving quick repairs to his communications: particularly to bridges. (The railway bridge at Pyinmana, for example, which was successfully bombed on the 8th March and rendered unserviceable, was found to be in operation again next day; and although it was bombed again at once, had again been repaired by the 16th.) In 224 Group's increased offensive, emphasis was also laid on cutting pipe-lines to the south of Yenangyaung, to deprive the enemy of oil and petrol for operating his few remaining aircraft and vehicles. Moreover, our success in bombing enemy rolling stock had by now brought all movement by day on enemy railways virtually to a standstill, since trains had to be dispersed and camouflaged.

616. It was now possible to extend our programme of counter air force operations against the enemy over a wide area of Burma and Siam, for Mustangs (P-51) of the U.S. Air Commandos had just sufficient range, from their bases in Arakan, to attack the main Japanese air bases in Siam, on which the greater part of the dwindling Japanese Air Force was based. An extension of general reconnaissance was also possible when 346 Wing was moved forward from Ceylon to Akyab, to provide escort for convoys in the forward area, and for strikes against enemy shipping off the Arakan coast. One Sunderland flying-boat squadron of this wing was based on the R.A.F. depot ship MANELA (which was to be moved to Malaya for ZIPPER); this squadron and the depot ship virtually forming a mobile flying-boat base, which was in a position to carry out strikes on a variety of targets which could not have been engaged from land bases in Ceylon or Southern India.

617. The rapid advance of Fourteenth Army in April, down the axes of the Irrawaddy and of the road and railway from Mandalay to Rangoon, now made it necessary to restrict the destruction of bridges, since

[1] See 'B', paragraph 293. This was the first and only time that a Super-Fortress (B-29) force was placed under the operational control of a Theatre Commander.

[2] The 20th Bomber Command could drop 1,000 tons of explosives in each raid on the ranges flown in S.E.A.C.

[3] A total of over 2,700 mines had been laid at very long ranges by the end of the war.

[4] Out of some 12,000 tons of bombs dropped on these targets, about 2,700 tons were dropped on the Burma-Siam railway in the nine months preceding the fall of Rangoon.

many of these would shortly be needed by our own troops. 224 Group was therefore able to pay more attention to enemy coastal shipping, dumps, troop concentrations and headquarters. The Group was increasingly used, also, for the introduction of British officers to the various guerrilla and Intelligence units behind the enemy lines.[1] Whereas in June, 1944, fifteen aircraft had been employed in this work, by April, 1945, this had been increased to sixty-one—and in the second half of April nearly the whole of the long-range fighter-bomber strength of 224 Group was being used against targets in conjunction with these Intelligence officers, who indicated targets and reported the results.

618. Towards the end of April, the Strategic Air Force was used in support of DRACULA[2]: and on the 1st May, 82 heavy bombers attacked the gun sites at Elephant Point to prepare the way for the dropping of the parachute battalion, as well as attacking other gun sites and strong-points on both sides of the Rangoon River. On D-Day, a further 58 aircraft carried on the bombardment while the seaborne landing was in progress; but when it became evident that the landing was going to be practically unopposed, the remainder of the heavy bombing programme was called off. After the capture of Rangoon, the Strategic Air Force was not called on to undertake any more short-range bombing in close support of land forces; and was now able to revert to its normal role of long-range attack. The aircraft of 222 Group, which had continued to undertake long-range mine-laying, discontinued this at the end of May (so as to avoid jeopardising the safety of the sea-borne forces for ZIPPER); and was now detailed for increased Special Duties operations in support of Force 136 parties on the Burma–Siam border and, particularly, in Malaya.

619. Malaya was now our main strategic objective, and the main emphasis in long-range bombing operations was accordingly being switched from targets such as the Burma–Siam road and railway—though attacks on these were not altogether abandoned—to others such as land and sea communications from Siam and French Indo-China to Singapore. Now that the monsoon was at its height, the difficulties of long-range bombing operations were considerable. The heavy bombers were at this time still operating from bases in Bengal: sometimes they had to make round-trips of 2,000 miles and more in order to reach their objectives.

620. On the 16th May, the U.S. 7th Bombardment Group, consisting of four Liberator (B-24) squadrons, was withdrawn from the Strategic Air Force and put under the command of the 10th U.S.A.A.F., as a preliminary to the total withdrawal of U.S. air formations and units from S.E.A.C. to China on the 1st June. The withdrawal of the U.S. 7th Bombardment Group not only reduced the bombing effort of the Strategic Air Force by half, but deprived us of the use of the Azon bomb-equipment[3] (a device not yet fitted to R.A.F. aircraft) which had been used with great effect in high-level bombing attacks; and this meant that important targets on the Burma–Siam railway, which were heavily defended by anti-aircraft and could not be bombed from a low level, would no longer be feasible. Unfortunately, this would also apply to certain important, but heavily defended targets on what had now become our top priority objective: the Singapore–Bangkok railway.

621. On the 1st June, the Strategic Air Force was disbanded.[4] Eastern Air Command was also dissolved; and all R.A.F. units now came under the control of H.Q., R.A.F. Burma. 231 Group (the British component of the Strategic Air Force) was taken over by Major-General J. T. Durrant, South African Air Force, and continued long-range strategic operations alone. The scale of these, already halved by the withdrawal of the U.S. 7th Bombardment Group, was now reduced still further because of bad flying weather—and this would limit the extension of bombing operations which would be necessary since many of the strategically most important targets were outside the boundaries of S.E.A.C. In order that not only targets in Malaya and Sumatra, but also in Java, Borneo, and French Indo-China could be brought within bomber range, I had for some time been planning to develop air bases not only in the Rangoon area, but also in the Cocos Islands;[5] from which 231 Group would be able to carry out long-range bombing, and 222 Group its long-range general reconnaissance.

622. In July, the airfields in Southern Burma became fully operative; and by the end of the month, also, 231 Group was operating from the Cocos Islands. Elements of 222 Group were also operating from there, as well as from Southern Burma; but a considerable portion of it continued to operate from Ceylon and Southern India, with no intermediate stages except Akyab and Kyaukpyu; and this lack of forward

[1] By the end of the war, some 1,200 of these had been introduced; and more than 2,500 tons of stores had been dropped to them (excluding drops to local guerrillas).
[2] See 'B', paragraph 543.
[3] This was used to control the lateral movement, in descent, of special bombs fitted with radio in the tail.
[4] See 'B', paragraph 584.
[5] See 'B', paragraph 345.

and intermediate bases hindered 222 Group's general reconnaissance operations. In the planning of all bombing operations, ZIPPER was now the first consideration. The Japanese were steadily reinforcing Malaya and Singapore by land and sea, in spite of the stratagems which we were employing, with some success, to discourage this.

623. If there had been a large force of heavy bombers at our disposal, we could have conducted a continuous and widespread offensive against the Japanese lines of communication; but shortage of aircraft, combined with monsoon conditions and the great range at which our aircraft had to operate, made such a course out of the question. It was therefore decided to concentrate on a few of the most important bridges; on shipping wherever it might be found; and on the general interruption of railway and road communications into Malaya from the north—but excluding communications between the ZIPPER area and Singapore, which we should need for MAILFIST. At the end of July, and well into August, this programme was being implemented on as great a scale as possible.

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At the beginning of June, I had enquired of the Chiefs of Staff whether I could safely begin to plan for post-MAILFIST operations on the assumption that the boundaries of S.E.A.C. would remain unchanged. It was important that I should know this, because immediate operational commitments would absorb the sea, land, and air forces in the Command to a degree that would make a rapid implementation of any extension of my present directive[1] impossible—particularly if this included an enlargement of the theatre. The Chiefs of Staff had replied that they could not at that time guarantee that the theatre boundaries would remain unchanged: for this question was under discussion in London and Washington, and other problems had to be solved before a firm directive could be given to me for post-MAILFIST operations. In the meantime, I was to continue the preparation of staff studies of operations for ejecting the Japanese from all occupied territories in S.E.A.C., and in particular from Siam—which was at war with Great Britain, but not with the United States (since they had ignored Siam's declaration of war)—and from Sumatra.[2]

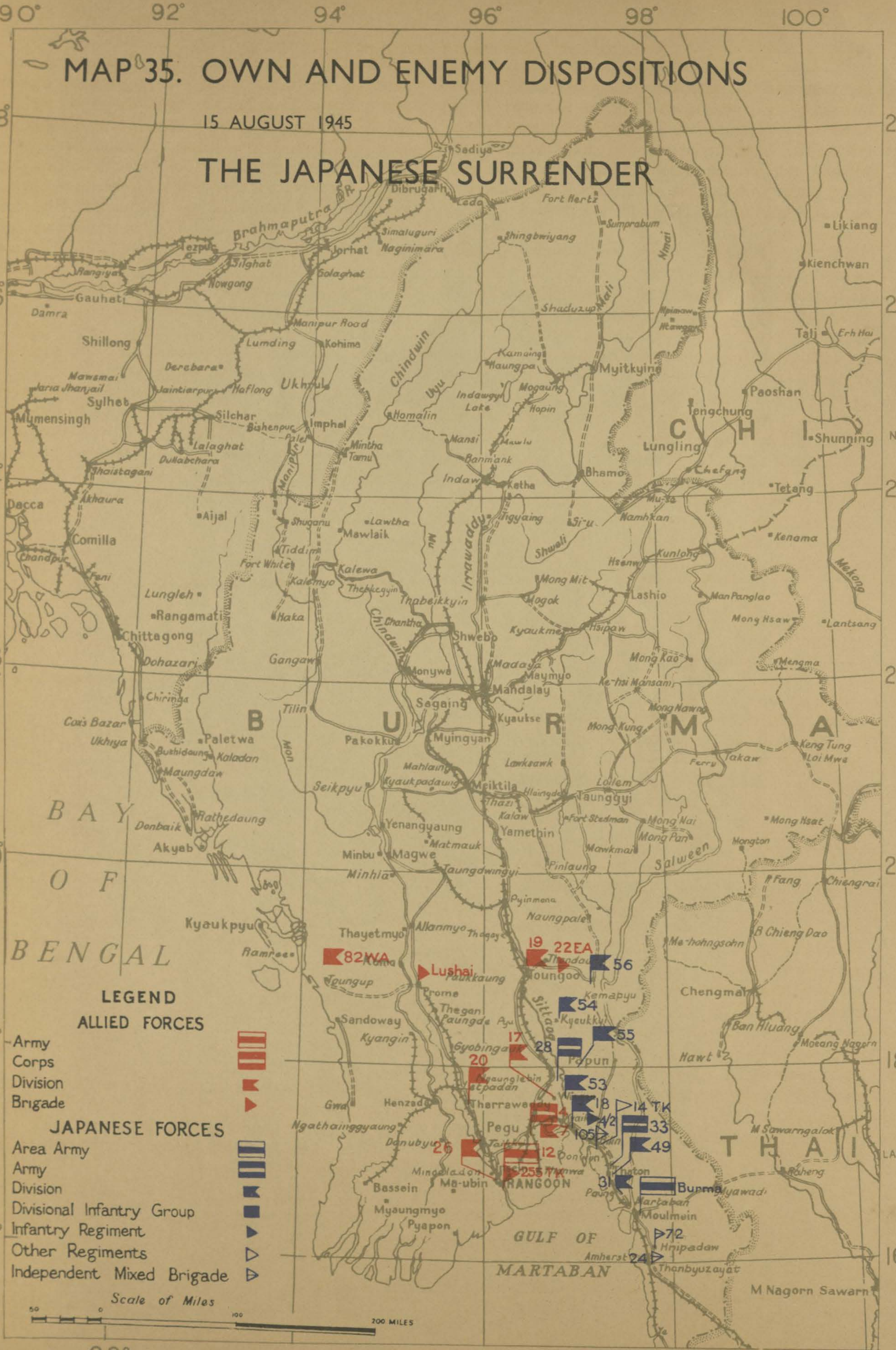
625. I replied that I would not be able to undertake operations in Siam before December (at the earliest): by which time, it was hoped, the Malayan operations would be more or less finished. I chose Siam, rather than Sumatra, because of its importance as a rice-producing area; and also because this country already contained the nucleus of a well-organised Resistance movement. This movement, when armed, supplied, and controlled by a Mission from S.E.A.C. Headquarters, would be able to give us valuable assistance; at the moment, however, it was very short of equipment, and largely untrained, and therefore incapable of initiating a co-ordinated revolt. And it was important that its rising should not be premature: for this might provoke strong Japanese counter-measures, which would make the eventual task of our own forces more difficult. But I proposed to the Chiefs of Staff that I should be allowed to arm and supply the Resistance movement, on an emergency plan for affording the greatest possible assistance if this should become necessary unexpectedly soon—and that a Mission should be established in Siam as soon as it had been decided how these activities would best fit in with the overall theatre strategy. The Chiefs of Staff agreed to these proposals; and action against Siam was accordingly to proceed along these lines.

626. I had obtained permission from the Chiefs of Staff to send a Mission from my Headquarters to that of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Allied Commander, South-West Pacific; but at General MacArthur's request, the Mission had been postponed pending firm decisions in Washington with regard to future operations in his theatre. But since I was anxious to have personal discussions with the Supreme Commander of my neighbouring theatre—about amphibious operations in the respective theatres, inter-theatre air operations, inter-headquarters liaison, and other matters of common interest—I had asked the Prime Minister if I might head the Mission in person; and this had been agreed. On the 11th July, I left Kandy for Manila with my Deputy Chief of Staff, Major-General Fuller, my Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, Rear-Admiral Douglas-Pennant, and senior officers from the principal divisions of my staff, including representatives from each service of both countries.

627. General MacArthur and I exchanged details of our forthcoming operations, so that our respective amphibious strategies should be co-ordinated; and it was agreed that he would do what he could to prevent

[1] See 'B', paragraph 395.

[2] An operation against Sumatra (CULVERIN) had been on my agenda at intervals since the Autumn of 1943.


MAP 35. OWN AND ENEMY DISPOSITIONS
15 AUGUST 1945
THE JAPANESE SURRENDER
LEGEND
ALLIED FORCES
Army
Corps
Division
Brigade
JAPANESE FORCES
Area Army
Army
Division
Divisional Infantry Group
Infantry Regiment
Other Regiments
Independent Mixed Brigade
Scale of Miles
50
0
100
200 MILES
BAY
OF
BENGAL
GULF OF
MARTABAN
B U R M A
C H I NA
T H A I LAND
90°
92°
94°
96°
98°
100°
28°
26°
24°
22°
20°
18°
16°
Sadiya
Dibrugarh
Ledo
Fort Hertz
Sumprabum
Likiang
Kienchwan
Brahmaputra R.
Tezpur
Silghat
Jorhat
Simaluguri
Naginimara
Shingbwiyang
Rangiya
Gauhati
Nowgong
Golaghat
Damra
Shaduzup
Mali
Nmai
Manipur Road
Lumding
Kohima
Shillong
Taki
Erh Hai
Derebara
Mawsmai
Jaintiarpur
Haflong
Ukhrul
Chindwin
Uyu
Kamaing
Haungpa
Myitkyina
Paoshan
Sylhet
Mymensingh
Silchar
Bishenpur
Imphal
Homalin
Indawgyi Lake
Mogaung
Hopin
Tengchung
Palel
Mintha
Tamu
Mansi
Mawlu
Banmauk
Lungling
Shunning
Lalaghat
Dullabchara
Shaistaganj
Manipur
Bhamo
Chefang
Indaw
Katha
Tetang
Dacca
Akhaura
Aijal
Shuganu
Lawtha
Mawlaik
Irrawaddy
Mu
Tigyaing
Si-u
Mu-se
Namhkan
Comilla
Tiddim
Fort White
Shweli
Kenama
Chandpur
Feni
Kalewa
Kalemyo
Thetkegyin
Mong Mit
Hsenwi
Kunlong
Mekong
Lungleh
Rangamati
Haka
Thabeikkyin
Mogok
Lashio
Man Panglao
Chittagong
Chantha
Shwebo
Kyaukme
Hsipaw
Mong Hsaw
Lantsang
Dohazari
Gangaw
Monywa
Madaya
Maymyo
Mong Kao
Mengma
Chiringa
Sagaing
Mandalay
Hsi Mansam
Tilin
Kyaukse
Mong Nawng
Cox's Bazar
Ukhiya
Paletwa
Buthidaung
Kaladan
Pakokku
Myingyan
Mong Kung
Keng Tung
Loi Mwe
Takaw
Ferry
Maungdaw
Mahlaing
Lawksawk
Seikpyu
Kyaukpadaung
Meiktila
Hlaingdet
Loilem
Thazi
Taunggyi
Rathedaung
Kalaw
Fort Stedman
Mong Nai
Mong Hsat
Donbaik
Akyeb
Yenangyaung
Yamethin
Mong Pan
Matmauk
Mawkmai
Mongton
Minbu
Magwe
Minhla
Taungdwingyi
Pinlaung
Salween
Fang
Chiengrai
Pyinmana
Naungpale
Kyaukpyu
Thayetmyo
Allanmyo
Thagaya
Mae-hohngsohn
B Chieng Dao
Ramree
82 WA
Lushai
19
22 EA
56
Taungup
Paukkaung
Toungoo
Prome
Kemapyu
Sittang
Chengmai
54
Sandoway
Thegon
Paungde
Kyaukkyi
Ban Hluang
17
55
Kyangin
Gyobingauk
28
Papun
Moeang Nagorn
20
Letpadan
Hawt
53
Gwa
Henzada
Tharrawaddy
18
14 TK
Ngathainggyaung
Pegu
105
33
M Sawarngalok
Danubyu
26
12
49
255 TK
Mingaladon
Ma-ubin
RANGOON
Thaton
Raheng
Bassein
31
Burma
Myawadi
Myaungmya
Martaban
Moulmein
Pyapon
72
Hnipadaw
Amherst
24
Thanbyuzayat
M Nagorn Sawarn




# MAP 36. EXTENDED BOUNDARIES OF S.E.A.C.

15 AUGUST 1945

ORIGINAL S.E.A.C. BOUNDARY

ADDITIONAL AREA TO S.E.A.C. 15 AUGUST 1945

the reinforcement of Malaya and Singapore. It was also agreed between us that, so long as inter-theatre boundaries remained unchanged, the Java Sea and the seas between Malaya and Borneo should be open to offensive operations by aircraft from both theatres, against certain types of target—an important extension of the scope of strategic bombing. At the same time, tentative arrangements were made for bomber and fighter squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force, based on Borneo, to be made available for the support of ZIPPER and MAILFIST.[1] Now that S.E.A.C. forces would be operating close to the South-West Pacific boundary, it would be necessary to establish closer liaison between the two theatres than had existed hitherto; and General MacArthur agreed with me that the best way to do this was that I should obtain the Prime Minister's approval for his own "Personal Representative with General MacArthur"[2] to take on the additional duty of Liaison Officer S.E.A.C.—in the way that Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart was acting at the Generalissimo's headquarters in Chungking.

628. General MacArthur suggested that as he would now be preoccupied with preparations for the assault on Kyushu (Operation OLYMPIC) which was to begin in November, and for the final assault on Honshu (Operation CORONET) scheduled for the Spring of 1946, I should take over all the South-West Pacific Area south of the Philippines. But I was not prepared to assume full responsibility until Singapore was available as our main base: since the logistical, shipping, and minesweeping difficulties, which this new commitment would entail, would be insuperable so long as we were still entirely dependent on bases in India, Ceylon, and Southern Burma. I therefore replied that after the capture of Singapore and the opening of the Straits of Malacca—probably by October—I would be willing to take on this commitment, if asked to do so by the Combined Chiefs of Staff; on condition that General MacArthur's appropriate Intelligence files, as well as those members of his Intelligence staff who had specialised in the areas he would be turning over, were made available to me in ample time.

629. On the 14th July, I returned to Kandy from Manila, and left again on the 23rd for London: where I had been called for discussions with the Chiefs of Staff. On reaching Cairo, I was handed a signal from the Prime Minister ordering me to proceed immediately to Berlin: where, although the Potsdam Conference (TERMINAL) was ending, a special meeting was to be convened for the discussion of future operations in South-East Asia. At this meeting, on the 24th, I was told that the Combined Chiefs of Staff had decided to draw new boundaries between the British Commonwealth and United States areas of command in the South-West Pacific. Under this new arrangement, General MacArthur would divest himself of the greater part of his Command, so as to be able to concentrate on Japan: the major part of the South-West Pacific Area would come within the boundaries of S.E.A.C. while the remainder would pass under Australian command.

630. General of the Army Marshall, urged me to take over responsibility for the territories involved—French Indo-China (south of 16° North), Java, Borneo and the Celebes—as soon as possible after the 15th August. I replied that I had not expected to be called upon to assume this new commitment until after ZIPPER and MAILFIST had been successfully concluded, and that I did not feel I could take effective control of them until Singapore had been secured as a forward base and the Straits of Malacca had been opened: which would probably be about the end of October. Moreover, I said, I would require adequate advance Intelligence regarding these new areas, for there was at present hardly any available to me. On being assured by General Marshall that the U.S. and Australian forces would remain *in situ* under my orders for the time being, I expressed the view that the new arrangement might be acceptable provided that, until I was able to take over effective control, my responsibilities were confined to higher direction of future strategy and planning. But before giving my definite agreement, I asked to be allowed to give the matter further consideration.

631. I was informed that a British Commonwealth land force, together with naval units and a small tactical air force, would take part in the main operations against Japan in the Spring of 1946; and that I would be required to provide a portion of the land force, as well as certain naval units (including the greater part of Force 'W')—and that the provision of these forces was to have priority over all operations in South-East Asia. In the meantime, I was also told, in the greatest confidence by the Prime Minister and the President at Potsdam, of the intention to use atomic bombs against Japan at the beginning of August: it was expected that the Japanese would at once sue for peace, and the Prime Minister predicted that the war in the Far East would end by the 15th August.

[1] I confirmed these arrangements with Air Vice-Marshal G. Jones, the Chief of the Australian Air Staff, who was in Manila. At the distances involved only Liberators would be able to operate and return to the Borneo base. Mitchells and fighters would refuel in the bridgehead area.

[2] Lieut.-General C. H. Gairdner. The Prime Minister approved of his additional appointment.

632. The secret was so closely guarded that it was not even mentioned in the conference by the Chiefs of Staff; and discussions of theatre strategy were pursued as though ZIPPER and MAILFIST were to begin in September and be carried through as planned, with the main operations against the mainland of Japan to begin in November. Planning was consequently rather unrealistic; but the Prime Minister (Mr. Churchill) allowed me to make a signal to South-East Asia, warning my Chief of Staff that there were strong reasons for thinking that the Japanese might capitulate at any time after mid-August, and telling him to prepare a plan for the re-occupation of Singapore (either direct, or through the ZIPPER bridgehead) as soon as capitulation appeared probable.

633. Meanwhile, I had returned to London from Potsdam on the 25th July, where I was joined by the S.E.A.C. Directors of Plans; and planning for ZIPPER and MAILFIST continued. I was still not satisfied with the arrangements for giving close air-support to the initial assaults at Port Dickson and Port Swettenham, for there had recently been indications that the Japanese were concentrating suicide aircraft (which had been used with such success against Allied shipping in the Pacific). I therefore again tried to persuade the Chiefs of Staff and the Defence Committee to lend me the light fleet carriers from the Pacific[1] (where they were not going to be used on operations until the beginning of November), to support the initial phases of ZIPPER; but my request was again refused, on the grounds that there was doubt if there would be time for sailing the carriers to South-East Asia, using them for ZIPPER from September 9th to 12th, and sailing them back again to the Pacific in time for Operation OLYMPIC in November.

634. On the 6th and 9th August, atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively; and on the 10th, while I was with the new Prime Minister (Mr. Attlee), the news was brought that the Japanese Government were prepared to discuss terms for the surrender of the Japanese Empire. On the 14th, Japan accepted unconditional surrender. I had left England on the 12th, and on the 15th August I issued orders from Kandy for the suspension of all land, air and sea operations in South-East Asia—so far as was consistent with the safety of Allied forces.

635. On the 20th August, Lieut.-General Stopford ordered General Kimura, Commander of the Japanese Burma Area Army, to cease hostilities immediately, and to make arrangements for the surrender of all his forces. Small-scale operations were still in progress in the Taunggyi area, on the Mawchi road, and at a few points in the Sittang valley.[2] Lieut.-General Stopford therefore instructed his commanders, while suspending operations, to take adequate precautions for the safety of their troops: for in some areas the local Japanese commanders were showing no signs of surrendering and there was a risk that isolated enemy units might continue to fight, even after surrender orders from their headquarters had reached them. Enemy activity did in fact continue for some days in the Mawchi, Shwegyin and Waw areas, where clashes occurred intermittently until the end of the month. But this was largely due to the fact that many of the forward units had not yet received cease-fire instructions from the Japanese High Command.[3] In order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, Lieut.-General Stopford authorised his formation and unit commanders to carry on informal negotiations with local enemy commanders prior to the formal ratification of surrender terms on a higher level. These negotiations were successfully carried out on many sectors of the front; and by the end of August the Armistice in Burma was almost complete.[4]

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On the 14th August I received a telegram ordering me to take over, on the following day, responsibility for that part of the South-West Pacific Area which had been discussed at the Potsdam Conference.[5] While the war was on I had been most unwilling to accept this responsibility until October; but in view of the American offer to leave all existing forces *in situ* (which would have meant that my responsibilities would be confined until the end of October to the security of these areas and to planning future operations within them), and to provide me with the necessary Intelligence in ample time, I had agreed to think the proposal over. This new order was therefore unexpected; and the circumstances were quite different.

[1] See 'B', paragraph 565.

[2] See Map 35 (facing page 180).

[3] On the 23rd August I received a signal from General Kimura to the effect that he had passed cease-fire orders to all units with which he could get in touch, but:—"There may be some units in the area west of the Sittang River whose position still remains unknown, and to whom the cease-fire order cannot be transmitted due to inability of communication. If the position of such units can be located by your side, I am prepared to despatch missions and transmit the cease-fire order."

[4] On the 13th September, Major-General Ichida, Assistant Chief of Staff to General Kimura, formally surrendered all Japanese forces in Burma to Brigadier E. F. E. Armstrong, Brigadier (General Staff), Twelfth Army.

[5] See Map 36 (facing page 181).

In war, no new operations in these areas had been contemplated until after October; now my responsibilities were immediate and urgent, but neither the troops, the shipping, nor the Intelligence I had asked for, were available to me.[1]

637. In my plans for carrying out my new tasks, one consideration was paramount: until it was certain that the Japanese in South-East Asia would obey the Imperial Order to lay down their arms, it would be necessary to conserve sufficient strength to deal with any major military development that might arise from their refusal to do so. Field-Marshal Count Terauchi, the Supreme Commander of the Japanese Expeditionary Forces in the Southern Regions, now had his Headquarters at Saigon: and an early control of his Headquarters might well influence any decision the Japanese might make, whether or not to offer large-scale resistance. In the meantime, in an effort to contact the Field-Marshal, messages addressed to him were broadcast by All-India Radio in Delhi and by Radio "SEAC" in Ceylon; while attempts were also made to get in touch with him through Manila and Saigon.

638. Before any of my new tasks could be undertaken, it would be essential to have a well-established advanced base: which only Singapore could suitably provide; and before the reoccupation of Singapore, it would be necessary to have forward naval bases for minesweeping and light craft, and an air staging-post. The sea-lift available was barely adequate for the minimum requirements for ZIPPER, and quite inadequate for the rapid re-occupation of a vast area, except by stages; while the air-lift available could in the first place only be used for the re-occupation of Lower Burma and Siam—areas within transport aircraft range of the air bases in Southern Burma. Forces and stores for ZIPPER were already moving down to the embarkation ports, and the ships were being loaded to a pre-arranged plan, which had been worked out in detail. It would have been impossible to alter ZIPPER, except in trifling matters, without producing chaos: the operation could have been cancelled entirely, but it would then have taken weeks to work out loadings for an entirely different operation.

639. For this reason (and also as an insurance in case considerable opposition should be met with in Malaya) I decided to continue with ZIPPER in sufficient force to ensure its success, even if the Japanese opposed it in strength. At the same time, it would be necessary to accept the risk of detaching certain forces from ZIPPER, in order to re-occupy Penang, as a temporary naval base and air staging-post, and Singapore, as the intended forward base: the seizure of Penang and Singapore would enable minesweeping to be carried on, and forces to deploy eastward as soon as possible. But these bases would only be seized before ZIPPER if the Japanese did not resist. On the 20th August, All-India Radio established communication with Field-Marshal Terauchi; and I immediately ordered him to send a delegation by air to Rangoon to meet my Chief of Staff, Lieut.-General Browning, and to sign a preliminary agreement, prior to the formal Instrument of Surrender of all forces in S.E.A.C., which would be signed in Singapore.

640. Broadly, my plans were as follows:

(*a*) to fly in 7 Indian Division from Burma to Bangkok, to seize Don Muang airfield as a staging-post and carry out Allied tasks in Siam (including the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees);

(*b*) to fly in 20 Indian Division from Burma to Saigon, *via* the staging-post in Siam, to control the Headquarters of Field-Marshal Terauchi;

(*c*) to carry out by sea the build-up of 7 and 20 Indian Divisions, as soon as lift could be found, and channels and ports swept;

(*d*) to reoccupy Penang (Operation JURIST) by Royal Marines of the East Indies Fleet: with one brigade from 5 Indian Division (destined for Singapore) in case of any local resistance beyond the capacity of the Royal Marine force;

(*e*) to re-occupy Singapore Island from the sea with 5 Indian Division (Operation TIDERACE), as soon as a channel could be swept;

(*f*) to despatch 3 Commando Brigade to Hong Kong[2] (Operation ARMOUR), in order to take over occupational duties from the British Pacific Fleet and the Australian contingents;

(*g*) to carry out Operation ZIPPER;

(*h*) to despatch 26 Indian Division either to Java or to Sumatra, as soon as channels could be swept, and lift found; and

(*i*) to re-occupy Lower Burma, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, at a later date, when the approaches and ports of these areas had been cleared.

641. On the 19th August, General MacArthur, whom the Combined Chiefs of Staff had created

[1] Nor were they ever made so; as will be explained later.

[2] Which, while not operationally forming part of S.E.A.C., was within the area of my administrative responsibility.

Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers to make overall arrangements for the surrender of the Japanese,[1] gave orders that the actual documents of surrender in theatres other than his own might only be signed after his own had been signed; and that no landing or re-occupation by military forces might be made until after the formal signature of the surrender document in Tokyo (which was expected to take place at the end of August). This was the first intimation I received that my plans for the re-occupation, which were being urgently proceeded with, would have to be postponed; and this was a great blow, at a time when the utmost speed was imperative. Ships, landing-craft, and some of the forces were already at sea; and if these were recalled and had to start again, the delay might mean a difference of life and death for the prisoners of war at starvation level. Since many craft were in any case incapable of turning back into the south-west monsoon, which was then at its height, without incurring severe damage or even total loss, I agreed with Admiral Power that these forces must be held forward temporarily; and I instructed him to take immediate steps to keep them at sea during these critical twelve days.

642. In one or two cases, the fact that ships were ordered to "mark time" at sea raised grave supply problems. Vice-Admiral Walker's force, which had sailed from Trincomalee on the 15th, for Penang, had to concentrate off the north-east coast of Great Nicobar Island; while Force 155 (consisting of fleet minesweepers), which had sailed from Colombo on the 15th and 17th, to sweep the Straits of Malacca, anchored to the lee of Simalur Island, off the west coast of Sumatra. These forces now had to be maintained at sea, far from their bases in Ceylon, for an unexpectedly long time—and without calling on the ships allocated to ZIPPER. Emergency arrangements had therefore to be made for maintaining the "little ships" such as minesweepers and coastal forces (which were not capable of distilling their own fresh water, and needed frequent replenishment of their fuel and food supplies) during the twelve days' delay which had been imposed on them.

643. On the 26th August, in accordance with my order to Field-Marshal Terauchi, the Japanese delegates arrived at Rangoon, to sign the preliminary agreement. The senior Japanese representative was Lieut.-General Numata, Chief of Staff to the Supreme Commander. His attitude, and that of his officers, was entirely correct; but there can be no doubt that they had come to Rangoon feeling that they were in a position to bargain over, or at least comment on, the terms which I had laid down for the execution of the surrender. For example, Rear-Admiral Chudo, the Supreme Commander's Assistant Chief of Staff, asked for separate treatment for the naval Commander-in-Chief, although the Tenth Area Fleet, which had been put under Vice-Admiral Fukudome, was under the direct operational control of Field-Marshal Terauchi.[2] But Lieut.-General Browning was very firm: he allowed no comments on the terms laid down, and allowed only those questions that aimed at clarifying the terms as they stood. The preliminary agreement was signed on the night of the 27th August; and instructions were sent through Field-Marshal Terauchi to the senior Japanese commanders concerned, that they should assist and obey the British commanders of the re-occupation forces, who would be acting with my authority and in my name.

644. As a result of this meeting, at which it had been obvious that the Japanese High Command intended to obey my orders punctiliously, I decided that I did not have to guard against large-scale opposition and that I could now take certain risks. Operations for the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (R.A.P.W.I.) started on the 28th: when pamphlets were dropped from the air over all known camps, with the object of spreading the news of the Japanese capitulation to the guards and the prisoners themselves (Operation BIRDCAGE). Immediately after this, and in spite of monsoon weather and extremely long ranges, the delivery of stores and relief personnel (Operation MASTIFF) began; while "Mercy" ships, loaded with supplies, were sent ahead of our forces, and the supplies were distributed under the guardianship of the Japanese.

645. If relief stores and personnel had not been sent in at once, the delay of twelve days imposed on me would have resulted in many more deaths each day among the prisoners. As it was, 950 tons of supplies and some 120 relief personnel were flown into known prison camps in the Command, before any military landings in Malaya took place. The formal signature in Tokyo of Japan's unconditional surrender had been fixed for the 31st August: but owing to a typhoon hitting the coast of Japan, the

[1] General Order No. 1, approved by the President and the Prime Minister, was issued to General MacArthur on the 15th August. This order also detailed certain areas in which the Japanese were to surrender: either to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or to the Commander of the Australian Forces. The division of this responsibility was to be by mutual agreement, and General MacArthur was to prepare this paragraph of the order.

[2] On the 29th August, I signalled the Field-Marshal that I held him, as Supreme Commander, directly responsible for all Japanese military, naval and air forces in the theatre.

ceremony was postponed until the 2nd September. After this the landings in South-East Asia could begin; and that same day, while the 6th and 37th Minesweeper Flotillas began to sweep the channel to Singapore, Royal Marines from the cruisers LONDON and CUMBERLAND landed at Sabang; and Vice-Admiral Walker arrived off Penang in H.M.S. NELSON, and received the surrender of the local Japanese commanders. On the following morning, the Royal Marines landed at Penang; and the brigade of 5 Indian Division that had been held available afloat, in case of trouble, sailed on for Singapore with the remainder of the division.

646. In the meantime minesweeping and the buoying of a channel had been in progress down the Malacca Straits, and in the area required for the ZIPPER landings; and on the morning of the 3rd, the minesweepers reached Singapore. Next day, H.M.S. SUSSEX, flying the flag of Rear-Admiral C. S. Holland, with 15 Corps Tactical Headquarters on board (and with 5 Indian Division and Corps and Area troops lifted in personnel and M.T. ships in company) arrived off Singapore. This force was met, in accordance with instructions, by Japanese Naval Forces, who led up the swept channel to the anchorage. The Japanese local commanders, including Vice-Admiral Fukudome, commanding the Tenth Area Fleet, signed the local surrender on board the SUSSEX—Rear-Admiral Holland and Lieut.-General Christison, commanding 15 Corps, signing in my name. On the following morning, 5 Indian Division landed without opposition: the re-occupation of the town proceeded smoothly, and the rehabilitation of the port facilities was begun at once.

647. I had signalled to Field-Marshal Terauchi that I would send 1350 personnel and 190 tons of stores by air to Don Muang airfield (some 15 miles north of Bangkok) on the 3rd September: that these would be mostly medical personnel, and that he was to co-ordinate with the Regent of Siam[1] regarding adequate measures for the safety of this force. At the same time I informed him that on the 11th, 1400 personnel would be sent to Saigon, and that he would be responsible for the safety of this force also. Between the 3rd and the 8th of September, 7 Indian Division Tactical Headquarters and 114 Indian Infantry Brigade were flown in to Don Muang from Burma; and a staging post was developed—both Siamese and Japanese showing themselves anxious to co-operate. Elements of 20 Indian Division were then staged through to Saigon: and here again, our reception was reassuring. As soon as troops had landed at Tan Son Nhuat airfield, and secured it, the S.A.C.S.E.A. Control Commission[2] was flown in, to establish control of the Japanese Supreme Headquarters.

648. On the 9th September, landings were made, as planned for ZIPPER, in the Port Swettenham–Port Dickson area. The reduced forces (for 3 Commando Brigade was now to be sent to Hong Kong) consisted of two divisions (23 and 25 Indian Divisions) in the assault; with 50 Indian Tank Brigade and 5 British Parachute Brigade as the build-up. Support was available from various units of the fleet: including the battleships NELSON and RICHELIEU, 3 cruisers, 5 escort carriers and 12 destroyers—and naval lift was provided by Force 'W', with Rear-Admiral Martin as Naval Force Commander. Flying operations had been begun from the carriers, the day before, to cover the D-Day convoys; and on D-Day 25 Indian Division landed on the Morib beaches near Port Swettenham. These beaches have a substratum of mud, which caused initial difficulties; but of a total of 2,420 vehicles landed, only three per cent. would have had to be written off in an assault. No opposition was offered; and Admiral Power at once ordered the withdrawal of all Fleet units from the area.

649. It had, of course, always been realised that the beaches and hinterland were far from satisfactory: and when the operation took place it became clear that it would have been better to put more weight into the right hook over the Port Dickson beaches: rather than to try and pass the main force over the Morib beaches near Port Swettenham. But the choice of a landing point must always be balanced between the easiest conditions (which will be best defended) and less easy, though still practicable, ones (which will be less well defended). In this case the Japanese overall defence plan had not allowed for a landing in this area, so the initial bridgehead would have certainly been secured, and our rate of build-up would have compared very satisfactorily with the enemy's. It would also have been greatly to our advantage that the enemy had not, in any case, expected a landing until after the end of the south-west monsoon, which finishes in October. Our plan for the seizure of Singapore might have been help up, as the Japanese had planned to concentrate there: whereas we had hoped that most of his forces might be drawn northward against ZIPPER, and allow us to make amphibious hooks down the coast to cut them off from Johore Strait. Although we later found that the Japanese scheme for defending

[1] Nai Pridi Bhanomyong, also Leader of the Resistance movement mentioned in 'B', paragraph 625.

[2] Under Major-General D. D. Gracey, commanding 20 Indian Division.

Singapore was badly organised and not properly co-ordinated as between the three services, their intention to withdraw so many troops back to Johore, and the presence immediately north of Johore Strait of 46 Japanese Division, would undoubtedly have delayed us in taking the island. After careful study of all the conditions, including the Japanese plans for the defence of Malaya and Singapore, I am satisfied that even if the enemy had opposed us with all the forces available to him, ZIPPER and MAILFIST would have been a complete success.

650. I had summoned Field-Marshal Terauchi to make the formal surrender for the South-East Asia theatre, at Singapore on the 12th September. He pleaded ill-health, and asked to be excused from attending; and a member of my medical staff, who examined him, certified that it would be most unwise for the Field-Marshal to travel—and that he would in any case not be able to take part in the surrender ceremony with dignity; since he had been crippled by a stroke on hearing of the loss of Mandalay, and had never fully recovered.[1] I therefore allowed him to delegate his authority, as Supreme Commander, to General Itagaki, Commander of the Japanese Seventh Area Army; and said that I would accept the Field-Marshal's personal surrender when I visited Saigon.[2] On the 12th September, 1945, I accepted the surrender of the Japanese Expeditionary Forces of the Southern Regions in the Singapore Council Chamber, in the presence of representatives of the armed forces of the United States, India, Australia, China, France and Holland, as well as of Great Britain.[3]

[1] It was the cause of his death in the following year.
[2] The Japanese Supreme Commander surrendered his sword to me at Saigon on the 30th November, 1945.
[3] See Appendix G (page 232).

# SYNOPSIS
# C. CIVIL AFFAIRS (BURMA)

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As Supreme Allied Commander, I was responsible for Military Administration of all liberated territory in South-East Asia, as and when it should be regained. On the 28th December, 1943, I received a directive from the British Chiefs of Staff, which laid down that both while Burma continued to be a scene of actual operations, and thereafter in so far as Burma remained a base for further operations, military requirements would be paramount. Until it became possible, having regard to these requirements (in the whole or any part of Burma) for Civil Administration to be re-established, Civil Affairs would be under a Military Administration deriving its authority from me.

2. On the 1st January, 1944, I assumed sole responsibility for those areas of Burma which we held on that day, and for those which we might subsequently re-occupy. This abolished the diarchy set up on the 15th February, 1943: when the uninvaded areas of Burma had come *de facto* under the control of H.E. the Commander-in-Chief in India, Field-Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell,[1] while remaining *de jure* under H.E. the Governor of Burma, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, who had reassembled his government at Simla in 1942. The Civil Affairs Service (Burma) had been established at that time, and Field-Marshal Wavell and Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith had jointly delegated appropriate powers to a senior Burma Government official, as Chief Civil Affairs Staff Officer at G.H.Q. (I.), who was known as Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Burma) and held the rank of Major-General.

3. On the 1st January, on taking over the existing Civil Affairs organisation, I issued a proclamation outlining responsibilities. I also sent a directive to Major-General C. F. B. Pearce, to whom, in his capacity as Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Burma), I delegated my powers. There was no overall commander to whom the C.C.A.O. (B.) could be made directly responsible; since three distinct military forces were operating, or about to operate, in the country. But as it was necessary for administrative purposes that legislation and financial arrangements should be uniformly enforced in the whole country by a single Military Administrator, Major-General Pearce was made directly responsible to me; and I had no alternative but to delegate my powers to him, direct. I decided, for convenience, to place him at General Giffard's Headquarters; but I gave him the right of direct access to me, provided that this was done with General Giffard's knowledge. A Civil Affairs staff was also set up at my Headquarters[2] to deal with all territories liberated in South-East Asia, including Burma.

4. The Civil Affairs Service (Burma) was organised into one Headquarters under Major-General Pearce, with a number of field units.[3] The Headquarters staff were responsible for planning and for the administration of the field units: which consisted of "formation" and "territorial" civil affairs officers and their staffs. The former were attached to military formations, down to the level of divisions and sometimes brigades; the latter were responsible for administering the civil population in military areas and sub-areas. The C.A.S. (B.) worked in close contact with the local military commanders: in the first place, assisting them in the forward battle area, by relieving them of detail in their relationships with the civil authorities and population; in the second place, by supervising the activities of the local population, so as to prevent disorganisation, disease, or unrest, from hampering the fighting troops.

5. At a later stage, C.A.S. (B.) had to take over administration of the territory re-occupied; establishing public order, providing supplies for the civil population and organising whatever local resources could assist the effort of the troops. Finally, they had, in so far as the military situation allowed, to create and run the various technical and administrative organisations which would enable the Civil Government to take over at the appropriate time.

6. Burma was the first British territory to be re-occupied—with the exception of British Somaliland, hardly a parallel case. Our only other experience of Military Administration, in this war, had been confined to enemy territory (mainly Italian colonies) in which quite different methods applied. There was therefore no precedent to guide our Military Administration in the difficult task of rehabilitating

[1] Who was succeeded as C-in-C in India by General (later Field-Marshal) Sir Claude Auchinleck on the 20th June, 1943 ; and returned on the 20th October, 1943, as Viceroy.

[2] See 'A', paragraph 39.

[3] This was in accordance with a letter I received from the Army Council, dated 26th January, 1944, which set out the organisation for Civil Affairs required for operations in the field.

the country and restoring public order, piecemeal. For it was not a question of setting up a British administration to supervise indigenous officials who were already functioning; but of re-introducing from top to bottom an organisation to take over any particular area as and when the Japanese might be expelled from it.

7. Officers with experience of the people of Burma and knowledge of the language were in extremely short supply;[1] and this shortage was, unfortunately, to continue. It was aggravated by the decision of H.M. Government that Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith should not move with his counsellors to London; for as a result of the Civil Government remaining in India, the remainder of its staff did not become automatically available to the Military Administration. The allocation of suitable personnel, between the Military Administration and Sir Reginald's Government, was therefore one of the first important matters to which joint consideration was given by the two authorities. The call made by the Civil Government on the small supply of officers who would have been suitable for the Civil Affairs service in the Military Administration, and the retention of the latter in Simla, engaged on long-term planning mostly unrelated to the short-term problems of the Military Administration, deprived the C.C.A.O. of the valuable technical and departmental staff who could have assisted, not only in his early planning but in the actual administration of the country.[2]

8. To expand an administrative body, at the speed which our subsequent rapid advance eventually made necessary, would have been difficult enough in a country where all main road, rail, river and sea communications had been destroyed and public order was practically non-existent. But in addition to these purely physical difficulties, there were obstacles which made the provision and distribution of personnel a constant and almost insoluble problem. To begin with, in the distribution among all the organisations concerned, of the personnel which became available to the Military Administration, priority had, for operational reasons, to be given to the Intelligence organisations and guerrilla units. Secondly, the Civil Affairs staff were seldom able to predict with any degree of accuracy, or sufficiently far ahead, how many officers would be required for the various centres of administration—since it was not possible to estimate the needs of any given area until the field units were actually on the spot and in a position to know how many local officials in that area would be suitable for incorporation.

9. For, as we advanced, the subordinate staffs—magistrates, clerks, policemen and relief workers—were almost without exception recruited locally. This had to be done in conditions of great disorganisation: former Government servants, on whose recruitment in adequate numbers, the establishment of administration very largely depended, having dispersed over a wide area while operations were in progress. The difficulty was increased during the earlier months of the campaign by the Japanese policy of forcibly removing all senior Government officials during their retreat; and it was only when the Japanese defeat had become a rout and the most southerly portions of the country were being reached that the Military Administration was able to contact a sufficient number of former Government servants.

10. But most of the former Government employees that the Japanese did not remove had, in any case, offered their services to the Japanese, in order to earn a living. (Having been instructed by the Government of Burma to do this, under international law; and their pay and pension rights, subject to "proper behaviour", having been guaranteed.) They had not been trusted by the enemy (who naturally suspected them of British sympathies), and were now not trusted by their fellow-Burmese, who despised them as collaborators. As a result, many of them, being irrevocably compromised, had become demoralised and corrupt.

11. In view of the obstacles I have enumerated, it never became possible for the Military Administration to provide a sufficient number of "territorial" staffs, or to allot "formation officers" to the headquarters of any formation below the level of division or independent brigade. During the early part of 1945, when our advance proceeded very rapidly, the gap between the commitments of the Military Administration and its ability to provide suitable officers for these commitments grew wider and wider. Long before we reached Rangoon the supply of trained officers possessing the necessary qualifications (which included experience of administration and knowledge of the language) to administer the newly re-occupied

[1] In 1940, in Class I Civil Service, out of a total strength of 162 officers, Burmans numbered 62, Indians 2, and Europeans 98; in Class II (or Provincial Services), out of a total strength of 221 officers, 207 were Burmans, and 14 Anglo-Burmans; in the Subordinate Civil Service there were 425 Burmans and 4 Anglo-Burmans.

[2] A limited agreement on planning was reached in May, 1944. This provided that the Government of Burma was to keep me informed of its views and plans—to which effect would be given, so far as was possible. The planning teams of the Civil Government and the Military Administration would work together.

districts, was exhausted. Under these conditions it was frequently necessary to transfer officers from rear to forward areas after only a few months and to replace them in rear areas by less experienced Civil Affairs officers, recruited on the spot or brought from India. This dislocation inevitably led to lack of continuity, but in the circumstances it was unavoidable.

12. The Military Administration was a temporary measure, until the Civil Government could resume responsibility. Considerations of military necessity had of course to receive first priority; but I was most anxious to fall in line, as far as circumstances allowed, with the Civil Government's long-term policy; and for this reason I maintained touch with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, and asked him to keep me informed of his plans. I also instructed Major-General Pearce to take all measures which would assist these plans, stressing in particular that any legislation which the Civil Government considered necessary, should be put into effect—except in cases where this would run counter to military considerations. Finally, I gave instructions that close contact should be maintained at all levels, so that the best ways of correlating the long-term reconstruction policy of the Civil Government with military short-term planning could be jointly considered.[1]

13. The first important matter to which consideration was jointly given was the extent to which the Civil Governor could exercise his statutory legislative powers; for during the military period, legislation enacted by the Governor could only become effective through a proclamation by the Military Administration.[2] It was eventually agreed, between Sir Reginald and myself, that, if he wished to propose that any legislation should be made effective within Burma during the period of Military Administration, his Government should approach my Headquarters, so that any such legislation, if approved by me, could be made effective by proclamation. Any legislation introduced solely for the time when the Civil Government had taken over, would contain a clause which provided that it would not become effective until a specified date, to be notified; and that no such notification would be issued before the return of Civil Government.[3]

14. In re-occupying Burma, I was determined to base my policy firmly on liberal principles and to make it clear to the people of Burma that we were not returning in a punitive spirit, or one of retaliation. One of the cardinal points of this policy was that the existing laws and regulations, which had already worked efficiently under emergency conditions, should remain in force. I instructed Major-General Pearce to issue proclamations amending the code, where special circumstances required this. But I would only consider adding to these laws by proclamations in two respects: (*a*) alterations which I considered justified by military necessity; and (*b*) alterations to comply with legislation which the Governor intended to introduce on the restoration of Civil Government, where I considered their application during my period of administration militarily justifiable.

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My directive laid down that I would be responsible, during the period of Military Administration, for the provision (subject to operational requirements) of supplies for the needs of the civil population, and for local industry and agriculture, to the level necessary to prevent disease and unrest and to secure the maximum assistance for the war effort. A Burma Supply Council had been set up in 1943, whose primary function was to estimate what commodities and resources were required: it acted as Commercial Adviser to the C.C.A.O., planning the retail distribution of supplies along commercial lines, and deciding what organisation was required to carry this out. Since November, 1943, the provision of essential supplies, to the small areas on the frontier which C.A.S. (B.) administered, had been undertaken by a Lines of Communication organisation with Headquarters at Calcutta; and this became a part of the Supplies and Industry Department of C.A.S. (B.). When I took over on the 1st January, 1944 it had been decided that plans for the rehabilitation of Burma as a whole would be drawn up by the Government of Burma and not by C.A.S. (B.); but that the latter was to be partly responsible for implementing them.

16. It soon became clear that it would be difficult to estimate the period of Military Administration; and to determine where the responsibilities for procurement on the part of the Military Administration ended and where those of the Government of Burma began. It was improbable that the whole

[1] The Governor appointed his Principal Counsellor (Sir John Wise) to be liaison officer between the Government of Burma in Simla and H.Q. S.A.C.S.E.A. in Kandy.

[2] Agreement was reached on this in May, 1944. (See also note 2 on page 190).

[3] This agreement was finally confirmed on the 26th October, 1944.

of Burma would be simultaneously liberated; and the disadvantage of limiting the procurement of Civil Affairs supplies to six months—which had been proposed—was that, since operations would almost certainly be prolonged beyond that time, I would have to rely upon the Civil Government (and an as yet untried procurement machine) to meet my demands. In April, 1944, therefore, I recommended to the War Office :—

(*a*) that the Government of Burma should prepare phased estimates for a period of two years;

(*b*) that my Headquarters should examine these estimates, and extract from them items acceptable as military procurement: these items to constitute the essential minimum for the prevention of disease and unrest, but to include the rehabilitation of ports, transportation systems, and civil utility services as needed for military operations; and

(*c*) that the procurement of all items remaining in (*a*) should be the responsibility of the civil authorities.

17. The Government of Burma agreed to this plan in principle, but considered that military responsibility, as set out in (*b*), should be confined to a six-month period. It was discussed in London by my Deputy Chief of Staff (Information and Civil Affairs):[1] at a meeting held at the War Office on the 13th April with the Permanent Under-Secretary of the War Office[2] in the chair, and attended by the Principal Counsellor[3] to H.E. the Governor of Burma and by Sir Archibald Rowlands.[4] It was decided at this meeting that military procurement would after all be on a basis of six months' supplies: the military authorities being responsible up to the quantity required for preventing disease and unrest, and the civil authorities being responsible for the balance. After a six months' period, the Government of Burma would be responsible for procurement; but all demands which were the concern of Lease-Lend would have to have military backing, for it was firm U.S. policy that no demands for Lease-Lend equipment would be granted for rehabilitation purposes.

18. In the event, however, by a liberal interpretation of the rules, it was possible to make supplies secured for the six months' period provide for a greater length of time. For in border-line cases (such as those of locomotives, rolling-stock, and harbour craft) the process of rehabilitation was inevitably assisted by the use of resources supplied for the movement of military requirements as well as by those supplied to move Civil Affairs tonnages; and service personnel and equipment were provided to the greatest extent compatible with operational priority.

19. In 1943, a Working Party had been set up under Sir Hubert Young, to assist the War Office in preparing Civil Affairs supply estimates; and to study the problem of food and other shortages in the occupied countries, with recommendations for the future needs of each country on its liberation. In 1944, the Young Working Party presented its report—this was now adopted as the basis of future planning, and the Burma Supply Council (which now became redundant) was dissolved. The report covered many thousands of items (including agricultural implements, machinery, food, clothing and foot-wear, household requirements, articles for house-repair, fishing-tackle, medical and veterinary supplies, etc.); and it recommended a target of 250,000 tons in imports for the next six months. Since all supplies were to be processed through as a military procurement, and Army supply channels used throughout, special supply officers of C.A.S. (B.) were attached to H.Q. 11 Army Group (and later transferred to H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A.), as well as to Headquarters of ordnance and supply depots, so as to arrange the transport of the supplies to distribution points. Distribution was organised partly by C.A.S. (B.) and partly by the appropriate civil departments of the Government of Burma.

20. The difficulties of supply and rehabilitation in Burma during the period of Military Administration were mainly due to the fact that, although before the war the country had been almost self-supporting in essential foodstuffs (and had in fact annually exported a large quantity of rice), this self-sufficiency had depended on a balanced distribution. The rice, fish and salt of Lower Burma had been exchanged for the dry crops of Upper Burma, such as cotton, vegetable oils, chillies and pulses. The country had never been self-supporting, the chief deficiency having been in textiles and clothing, which normally accounted for one-third of her total imports. Until 1942, though it was to some extent affected by world shortages, the supply position in Burma had continued to be satisfactory; but when the Japanese overran the country normal imports had abruptly ceased: and in the next three years internal supply and distribution was to reach a state of chaos. Road, rail,

[1] Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté.
[2] Sir Frederick Bovenschen.
[3] Sir John Wise.
[4] Who was Adviser to the Viceroy on War Administration, and also acted as my Financial Adviser from November, 1943 to October, 1944. (See 'A', paragraph 27).

and river transport, which had already suffered in the campaigns of 1942, were subjected to three years of Allied air attacks, and were finally largely destroyed by the retreating Japanese; so that by 1945 the dislocation was practically complete. All interchange of goods between Northern and Southern Burma had ceased; and the resultant economic breakdown had been accentuated, if that were possible, by lack of mineral oils; for those oil centres which had survived our "scorched earth" policy had later suffered from our bombing.

21. By the time the Military Administration was responsible for most of the country, acute world shortage of almost all essential commodities made it impossible to supply Burma on anything like the scale we would have wished, and which the Burmese themselves expected. Moreover, military supplies had naturally to take priority over civil supplies; and neither Great Britain nor America, nor India was in a position to send civil supplies in bulk to Burma: Great Britain, because the supplies were not available there; America, because the provisions of Lease-Lend did not apply to civil supplies; and India because that country, which had formerly supplied large quantities of cloth and food to Burma, had not yet recovered from the famine of 1943 and was, in any case, being called upon to contribute to the war-effort in many parts of the world. Nor would the authorities in London and Washington accede to demands for civil supplies for Burma until operational plans had been finally approved—which inevitably meant that too little was supplied, too late.

22. It was not until Rangoon had fallen, and the major part of Burma had been reconquered, that we were able to appreciate the extent of the financial and economic collapse of the country. The inflationary tendencies, which had been developing under the Japanese occupation, had reached their peak.[1] After the re-occupation of Rangoon, there was considerable agitation (mainly on the part of those who had made large paper fortunes by dubious means out of the Japanese occupation) for the Japanese currency to be recognised—even at an exchange rate considerably below its face value. The repudiation of the Japanese currency, however, though not a measure which of itself would immediately reduce the degree of inflation, was a step which however drastic, would eventually have to be taken; and it was thought better not to postpone it. It was the cause of temporary hardship to the community: in particular to the rural population living far from main lines of communication. These people were severely hit; since, until the new currency could filter through to them, they were reduced to exchange by barter. But distribution was speeded up, and in the meantime advances were made to cultivators in many districts of Lower Burma from August, 1945 onwards (and, after the surrender, in the Tenasserim Division).

23. There was no quick solution to the problem of inflation; since inflation in terms of Japanese currency would only be replaced by inflation in terms of British Military Administration currency, until such time as an adequate supply of consumer goods could be made available, and some level of stability introduced in the national economy. But in Burma, where ordered life had completely broken down, it was idle to try and apply time-honoured solutions; such as curtailing surplus spending power, by an increase of taxation and savings, by rationing systems and equitable distribution, and by curtailing the structure of wages and prices. So far as wages were concerned, the Army was by far the greatest employer of labour, and was to that extent in a position to regulate the wage level throughout the country.

24. In March, 1944, it had been suggested that a clause be inserted in the contracts of skilled and unskilled labourers recruited in India for the duration of the war, under which they could be retained in Burma when the Military Administration handed over to the Civil Government, if the Government required them. I considered it vital, however, that two principles should be established; firstly, that our liberation of Burma should not be synonymous with large-scale re-introduction of Indian labour, which already before the war had been a cause of dissatisfaction; secondly, that in the transition period between the end of Military Administration and the smooth functioning of Civil Government, any foreign labour retained as a temporary expedient should be in a position to command whatever wage rates would then be current.

25. I therefore laid down that the Military Administration should be responsible for repatriating such labourers to India, when their military contract expired, if they wished to go; on the other hand, that they were to be allowed to remain in Burma, if they elected to do so, without any restrictions as to wage levels. Not only did I consider this the elementary right of the Indians, but I realised that the Burmans would only believe that local labour was not being undersold, if it were known that no military recruitment clause, or other previous commitment, was operating.

[1] A pair of bullocks and a cart, which had sold in 1942 for 180 rupees, were now selling for 20,000 rupees (Japanese); a bicycle for 10,000 rupees; and the price of all necessities of life had risen in proportion.

26. Comprehensive instructions, regulating wages and working conditions in all forms of employment were subsequently issued by H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A. in February, 1945, but it was soon found that apart from the impracticability of enforcing wage scales in private employment, the scheme was prevented from working effectively by the great difficulty experienced in enforcing the control of prices—without which wage-control is not a feasible proposition. A Price Control Proclamation had already been issued, under which authorised officers were empowered to fix maximum prices for goods sold, property hired, and services rendered. But although Civil Affairs officers were ordered to control only vital items, and to control them effectively, they inevitably tended to place too many commodities under orders; and these orders could not be effectively enforced, since successful control of prices involves the control of supplies—and may even have to include subsidies for both imports and local production.

27. The control of supplies, however, was out of the question; for even the necessities of life were never available in sufficient quantities during the period of Military Administration. Lack of statistics, the destruction of records, and of all machinery for assessment and collection, made the imposition of widespread taxation impossible (except for such indirect forms as the sale of licences). There could be no effective system of rationing—always a difficult matter in predominantly agricultural areas—since there was no prospect of obtaining the very large trained staff which is necessary for organising a system of this kind.

28. In face of all these difficulties, it was almost inevitable that a widespread Black Market should arise in all essential commodities. Although this state of affairs was to continue until the supply of consumer goods increased and the general standard was raised and stabilised, it cannot be said that the inflation problem was satisfactorily solved during the period of Military Administration; but the degree of inflation at the time of the hand-over to Civil Government was small compared with what it had been in the last days of the Japanese occupation.

29. Until the 1st January, 1944, the medical staff and institutions in the Government of Burma Frontier Administration had been under the administration of the Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals (Burma), in Simla; and there were 13 civilian medical officers in the service of the Government of Burma, controlling five hospitals of from ten to thirty beds each, and two dispensaries. C.A.S. (B.) had been formed on 15th February, 1943, but there was no Medical Staff Officer at H.Q. until 16th February, 1944—although for more than five months before this the appointment had been under discussion with the War Office. When the Controller of Medical Services was appointed, he had no staff whatever; although a provisional War Establishment existed, which provided for 5 headquarters officers and 83 field unit officers.

30. The medical War Establishment for the whole of Burma, on a territorial basis, was finally worked out and sanctioned: 12 headquarters officers; 672 field unit officers (of whom 17 were to be Lieut.-Colonels); 8 women doctors; 4 matrons; and 399 nurses. (This War Establishment included the personnel for Welfare, jails, and certain mobile units; all other personnel were to be civilian employees.) No appointment of an officer of or above the rank of Lieut.-Colonel could be implemented without War Office sanction; and this was to be the cause of much delay in planning, in spite of frequent recommendations. By the end of 1944, no officer had been posted to the Public Health Section, though an urgent demand had been made for the services of an Assistant Director of Hygiene and Deputy A.D.H.; but the posts of 5 headquarters officers, and 70 field unit officers (including one Lieut.-Colonel) had been filled; a total of 75 out of an authorised 684; as against 13 civilian medical officers at the beginning of the year.

31. Although in all areas reoccupied in 1944, pre-war hospital buildings were found to have been totally destroyed, and temporary mat-and-thatch buildings had to be put up, by the 31st December there were 31 medical units in the field (with a total of 600 beds)[1] as against 7 units under the control of the Government of Burma at the beginning of the year. In the last six months, approximately 16,000 in-patients and 125,000 out-patients had been treated.

32. In the early stages, the supply of medical stores was the responsibility of the Burma Supply organisation of the Government of Burma; and at first, owing to the general shortage, the initial non-expendable items were difficult to obtain. A demand had already been submitted in 1943 for medical stores on an all-Burma basis; but only that proportion (known as Q-60) which covered the Frontier Fringe Zone had been sanctioned, in view of the intention to apply the estimates of the Young Working Party to the C.A.S. (B.) Medical Department. There was great delay in the distribution of the Working Party estimates, without which demands could not be placed;

[1] By the end of 1945, there were 225 medical units in the field, with a total of 8,400 beds.

but these were submitted complete in November, 1944. Up to the end of the year no information had been received of Working Party stocks expected from the United Kingdom, and this began to cause grave concern; but as time went on the supply of serums and vaccines, as well as of expendable drugs and dressings (which was subsequently undertaken by A.L.F.S.E.A., through normal Army channels) became satisfactory.

33. On the whole, the Japanese appeared to have shown hardly any concern for the health of the local populations, except in so far as the safeguarding of the health of their own troops was concerned. During the occupation, quinine and other anti-malarial drugs had ceased to be available for the treatment of the general public; and malaria, always a serious problem in large parts of the re-occupied areas, was found to have increased seriously—occurring, owing to shifting population, even in towns which had been immune before the war. No vaccination had been carried out since 1941; and smallpox epidemics were reported in several areas—mass vaccinations were therefore carried out in all areas on our return. Cholera also appeared in epidemic form in Northern Arakan and in the Myitkyina area; and mass innoculations were necessary.

34. Malnutrition was widespread. During the occupation, food had been deficient; and even in areas where there was no shortage of rice, there had been a lack of salt, vegetable oils, and other essential ingredients of a balanced diet. A general lowering of the standard of living, scarcity of clothing, lack of soap and the over-crowding due to war conditions, had all combined with the breakdown of medical services, to lowering the people's resistance to infection and disease. This state of affairs called for intensive medical and public health work as soon as adequate supplies and staff became available. In spite of lack of personnel, accommodation, and ordnance equipment in the early stages, and a grave shortage of transport which was to continue throughout, the medical services of Burma were to be very largely restored during the period of Military Administration.

35. I had taken particular care to see that educational facilities were restored throughout the country by the time the Civil Government returned; but in this sphere the initial difficulties had been even greater. An order had been issued by G.H.Q. (I.) in 1943, to the effect that the C.A.S. (B.) would not provide any education in Burma during the period of Military Administration; throughout 1944, therefore, there was no Education Department in C.A.S. (B.), and all educational work undertaken in the re-occupied areas was on the personal initiative of Deputy Chief C.A.O.'s and Senior C.A.O.'s, with no co-ordination of policy. The order in question was superseded; and War Establishments for an Education Department, together with a plan and a directive for Education, were eventually submitted for approval on the 19th February, 1945. These were approved by A.L.F.S.E.A. and (subject to certain provisos) by the Government of Burma by the middle of April; War Office sanction was not received until the 14th July.

36. The youth of Burma had now been virtually without education for three years, and there was intense pressure throughout the country in demand of the re-opening of schools. The delay in sanctioning the War Establishment and Plan had also led to complaints by field unit officers at the apparent inaction of the Education Department. The strength sanctioned was 21 officers and 903 civilians; and between August and December, 1945, actual strength rose from 11 to 21 officers, and from 79 to 615 civilians. By the end of the year, also, there were 1,639 schools of all types functioning in Burma, with a total daily attendance of 105,703 pupils; while 458 students were attending emergency University courses, and 42 were attending civil engineering classes. Arrangements were also being made to conduct school examinations and teachership-certificate examinations in the Spring of 1946.

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In January, 1944, the Allies held only the Frontier Fringes of Northern Burma—less than one-tenth of its total area—and operational control was exercised by Lieut.-General Slim, who had one of Major-General Pearce's deputies at his headquarters. In the extreme north, there were two territorial Civil Affairs staffs: at Fort Hertz and in the Hukawng Valley, respectively.[1] The latter provided the senior staff officer for Civil Affairs at Lieut.-General Stilwell's Headquarters; but both staffs were technically subordinate to the D.C.C.A.O. at Fourteenth Army Headquarters.

38. By March, 1944, the zone of Military Administration was beginning to expand rapidly in the Myitkyina district. On the 20th, Sumprabum[1] was reoccupied;

[1] See Map 37 (facing page 196) for Divisions and Districts. Fort Hertz (B.9) and Sumprabum (C.9) are shown on Map 7 (facing page 1).

and by the end of the month the whole of the Hukawng Valley had been liberated. The important airfield at Myitkyina fell on the 17th May; and by the end of June, Kamaing and Mogaung were in our hands. At this point, Lieut.-General Stilwell had come under my direct command; and the Civil Affairs staff in N.C.A.C. had come directly under Headquarters, C.A.S. (B.).[1]

39. General Stilwell's attitude towards the tasks of caring for refugees and organising medical services for the civil population of Northern Burma, based as it was on a short-term interest as opposed to the long-term British interest in these territories, was understandably different from that of the British commanders. The transport of essential supplies to Myitkyina had to be greatly curtailed during the monsoon, so as not to interfere with military operations; and this tended to hamper the introduction of the Welfare organisation in the district. In practice, however, the medical care given to the civil population on this front, though it did not compare with what was being done on the other fronts, went well beyond the bounds of military necessity.

40. In Northern Arakan there was one territorial staff, and a D.C.C.A.O. was appointed to 15 Corps Headquarters. The original centre of administration was transferred from Maungdaw back to Bawli Bazaar, where it was to remain throughout 1944. In the campaign of the previous year, many civilians had been made homeless in this area; and many more were to suffer in the operations which began in January, 1944. Much of the work of rehabilitating the district fell to the Civil Affairs Welfare organisation, which set up relief camps, hospitals and dispensaries, for the homeless; and by the middle of the year, 40,000 civilians were being cared for in this way. Fortunately, Arakan is rich in cereals; and although a large part of the crops was destroyed during the fighting, the food situation was always fairly good in comparison with the isolated and less fertile districts in the Chin Hills and in the extreme north.

41. In the 4 Corps area, there were three territorial staffs: in the Chin Hills, the Upper Chindwin, and the Naga Hills respectively; and a D.C.C.A.O. was attached to Corps Headquarters. In March and April, 1944, the Japanese over-ran the Naga Hills, the Upper Chindwin, and most of the Chin Hills; and the Civil Affairs staffs in the first two districts and at Corps Headquarters ceased to function, while the Chin Hills district came temporarily under Fourteenth Army. When the Japanese offensive was fully extended, only 25,000 tribesmen remained under our administration; but by the end of June, when the Naga Hills and other territories had been recovered, their number rose to 186,000.

42. Until the middle of 1944, it was difficult to assess the achievements of C.A.S. (B.) in the re-occupied areas, except in very general terms. For on the 22nd June, when the Imphal–Kohima road was re-opened, it was operating only in the north-western corner of the Akyab district, in certain stretches of the Chin Hills, in the Hukawng Valley district, and in part of the Myitkyina district. And in these areas Civil Affairs officers had been able to do little more than care for refugees and assist the military commanders in maintaining order among the civilian population. But the relief of Imphal was an important milestone in the campaign, and in the second half of 1944, we proceeded to re-occupy all Burma north and west of a general line Rathedaung–Gangaw–Tigyaing–Bhamo. In terms of Civil Districts, this meant that we had recovered the northern half of Akyab, the Arakan Hill Tracts, the Chin Hills, the Upper Chindwin, the Naga Hills, the Hukawng Valley, and Myitkyina; as well as parts of the districts of Pakokku, the Lower Chindwin, Shwebo, Katha, and Bhamo. C.A.S. (B.) was functioning in all these districts by the end of the year; and was administering a population of about 1½-million over an area of approximately 77,000 square miles.

43. The Headquarters staff of C.A.S. (B.) had been much hampered in its planning by the uncertainty which had attended the evolution of the Higher Command in Burma. But in the middle of November, A.L.F.S.E.A. was finally set up, and at the same time a new command was set up under H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A., in the rear areas. This Lines of Communication Command, as it was called, was divided into Areas and Sub-Areas; and Civil Affairs units had to be found for these at short notice, in addition to those already allocated to the formations of Fourteenth Army, 15 Corps, and Districts in all parts of the country.

44. When Advanced Headquarters A.L.F.S.E.A. was set up in Barrackpore there was insufficient accommodation ready to move C.A.S. (B) Headquarters forward from Delhi: it was not until March, 1945, that this move could be made. During this

[1] On the 4th August, 1944, I issued a directive to the Commanding General, N.C.A.C., which restated the division of responsibility for Civil Affairs. This provided that the C.C.A.O.(B.) should be a Staff Officer at the Headquarters of both 11 Army Group and N.C.A.C. His relations with both Commanders were to be the same; and he was to consult them both in matters of policy regarding all occupied areas.


MAP 37
BURMA
DIVISIONS AND DISTRICTS
(MAP 37)
KEY
International Boundaries
Divisional Boundaries
District Boundaries
District Headquarters
Roads Metalled
Railways
INDIA
CHINA
SIAM
NAGA HILLS
HUKAWNG VALLEY
(E. AND S.E. BOUNDARIES UNDEMARCATED)
MYITKYINA
Myitkyina
UPPER CHINDWIN
SAGAING
Bhamo
BHAMO
Katha
KATHA
Mawlaik
NORTHERN SHAN STATES
WA STATES (UNADMINISTERED)
FEDERATED SHAN STATES
Lashio
SHWEBO
Falam
CHIN HILLS
Shwebo
MANDALAY
LOWER CHINDWIN
Monywa
Sagaing
Mandalay
SAGAING
Kyaukse
HILL TRACTS OF ARAKAN
PAKKOKU
Myingyan
Paletwa
Pakkoku
MAGWE
MYINGYAN
Meiktila
MEIKTILA
Taunggyi
ARAKAN
SOUTHERN SHAN STATES
Yamethin
AKYAB
MINBU
MAGWE
Magwe
YAMETHIN
Minbu
Loi-kaw
Akyab
KYAUKPYU
THAYETMYO
KARENNI
Kyaukpyu
Thayetmyo
TOUNGOO
Toungoo
Prome
SALWEEN
PROME
PEGU
Sandoway
THARRAWADDY
PEGU
Papun
TENASSERIM
SANDOWAY
HENZADA
Henzada
IRRAWADDY
Tharrawaddy
Pegu
INSEIN
THATON
MAUBIN
Insein
Thaton
BASSEIN
Rangoon
Maubin
HANTHAWADDY
Bassein
Moulmein
Myaungmya
AMHERST
MYAUNGMYA
Pyapon
PYAPON
TAVOY
AMHERST
TAVOY
Tavoy
SIAM
Mergui
MERGUI

interval liaison was maintained by half a dozen C.A.S. (B) officers between these two Headquarters which were separated by nearly a thousand miles. But since a still greater distance separated C.A.S. (B.) H.Q. from its formation and territorial units, the detailed direction of Military Administration in any case devolved to a great extent on the D.C.C.A.O.'s at Army and Corps headquarters—and this at a time when the campaign was going full speed ahead.

45. In the first four months of 1945, our advance was continuing; and when Rangoon fell, on the 3rd May, we had liberated the whole of Northern and Central Burma, almost the whole of Arakan, the valley of the Sittang,[1] and parts of the valley of the Lower Irrawaddy: which meant in effect that we were administering 37 districts (and parts of 4 more) representing 80% of the population and about 70% of the total area of Burma.

46. Althouth the re-occupation of Rangoon marked an important step in the liberation of Burma, the town itself was found to be in a state of considerable disrepair; and its preparation as a land and air base for future operations was our first concern. Substantial damage had been done by our bombing, and by the looting and arson which had occurred during the few days between the Japanese evacuation and our arrival. The repair of the water supply and the sewerage system was of primary importance to the military authorities, and took precedence over all other reconstruction work. The restoration of the electricity supply, and other public services, was at this time beyond the resources of the Military Administration.

47. The military commanders, subject to the overriding requirements of the monsoon campaign, were able to assist C.A.S. (B.) in maintaining internal security; but it was inevitable that until mid-August, when operations virtually came to an end, the Civil Affairs units and the civilian population they administered should have to take second place in such matters as supply, transport, communications, and housing. There was a great housing shortage, a shortage of food,[2] and the usual shortage of land and air transport; and the advance on Rangoon had stretched all available means of communication by land, sea and air, to the utmost. For the next two months, it was as much as we could do to bring in the bare minimum of supplies necessary for the prevention of disease and famine.

48. The position was complicated before and during the Battle of the Break-out[3] by a constant stream of refugees (amounting in the end to more than 50,000) who flooded out of the Pegu Yomas and the hills east of the Sittang, seeking shelter in the Sittang and Irrawaddy valleys. Red Cross and Welfare workers helped the Civil Affairs officers to care for these people, who were clothed, housed, and fed in 25 relief camps set up for the purpose. In the meantime, effective administration was further hampered by the presence of isolated parties of Japanese who could not be cleared up until the land battle was won and troops became available to do this.

49. After a time, more transport became available, as country carts, old trucks (usually run on Japanese petrol or on spirit distilled from rubber), river-craft and bullock carts, were all pressed into service; and the supply position gradually began to improve. But it was difficult to obtain sufficient quantities of the commodities required, in view of the world shortage, and everything possible was done to stimulate local production. Encouragement was given not only to local pre-war industries, but to newly-established ones, such as textiles and metal-working, which large-scale imports had formerly made unnecessary or uneconomic.

50. In March, 1945, the emergency C.A.S. (B.) Lines of Communication organisation was dissolved, and the Supplies and Industries Department was reorganised in four main sections—Provision, Distribution, Transport, and Projects—to deal with the supply programme and to undertake the long-term rehabilitation of industry, on behalf of the Government of Burma. Markets were established at points in the Irrawaddy Valley (the main highway of the country), where traders from North and South were able to meet and exchange their produce; and projects were started for certain key industries—such as rice, salt, rubber, hides and tung oil—with the double object of restoring Burma's internal economy and of providing material for export to other territories of S.E.A.C., to India, and to the United Kingdom. The largest, and from my point of view, the most important, of these, was the Rice Project[4]; for rice was urgently needed not only in the deficiency areas of Burma itself, but in other territories of S.E.A.C. and in India.

51. With the setting-up of these Projects the stabilisation of the national economy of Burma was begun; and although in many districts the inhabitants were living barely above subsistence level, a minimum of supply and distribution was being maintained, in spite of great difficulties, and the foundation

[1] See Map 32 (facing page 152).
[2] The troops of 4 Corps were for several weeks on half rations.
[3] See 'B', paragraphs 598 to 603.

[4] By the end of 1945 the Rice Project had purchased 250,000 tons of rice of which 100,000 tons had been exported, 50,000 tons delivered locally, and 100,000 tons put into storage.

of the long-term rehabilitation of the country was being laid. The civil population were now beginning to feel sufficiently confident in the permanence of the Administration to consider it worth while to report crimes: many of which, such as dacoities[1], had previously been committed with impunity. This had been partly due to insufficiency of police forces available, and partly to the threats of reprisal with which dacoits had consequently been able to intimidate the population in many districts.

52. When Rangoon was re-occupied, the Burma police force was increased and police-stations were opened. During the monsoon months this increased force (assisted by such regular troops as could be spared from operations) began to operate in Burma as a whole; with the result that the internal security situation greatly improved, particularly in those areas in which Military Administration had been longest established. The most notable exception was the Irrawaddy Delta, the richest rice-producing district of Burma, which comprised the five districts of Bassein, Henzada, Ma-ubin, Myaungmya, and Pyapon. The Japanese had evacuated these districts almost completely at the end of April; and as they therefore became operationally unimportant, we did not re-occupy them until the beginning of August—and then only on a skeleton basis. In the intervening months, the Delta had remained without administration: except by isolated groupings of the A.F.O. and B.N.A.—as well as by irresponsible elements and criminals who claimed to be members of these organisations. There had also been a serious outbreak of communal troubles between the Burmese and Karens; and since these conditions would have made it impossible for Civil Affairs units to operate without strong support by regular troops, it was decided not to introduce Military Administration into the districts of the Delta until this support was available.

53. When C.A.S. (B.) was finally introduced here, the extension of its authority was slow; for administration had to radiate progressively from firmly established bases, and this process was physically hampered by the fact that in most of this area intercommunication was only possible by boat. Delay in bringing the Delta under Military Administration undoubtedly made the eventual establishment of authority more difficult. But I am certain that, under a hasty and insufficient introduction of C.A.S. (B.), not only would Civil Affairs officers have been exposed to considerable danger, but their authority could have been defied with impunity—with a consequent loss of prestige.

54. In addition to the material obstacles with which the Military Administration had to contend, and which I have described, there was another of a less tangible nature, but which was to have important consequences. This was the fact that much important information about the internal political situation in Burma had become available only at a comparatively late stage. Civil Affairs had until then depended on Intelligence; and Intelligence, in its turn, depended largely on wireless reports from liaison officers infiltrated into the country by Force 136, who took great care that these officers should not be compromised. There had consequently been a tendency not to keep Civil Affairs staffs in the picture.[2] This accounts for the fact that the very existence of the A.F.O., and of the projected rising of the B.N.A., had not been reported until the latter was imminent—nor had its significance, and its implications with regard to our subsequent dealings with the people of Burma, consequently been at once realised.

55. Before the campaign began, it had been anticipated that the Burmese would welcome our return; and although the attitude of the population to the re-occupying troops varied according to districts and with the nationality of the liberating forces,[3] our expectations had proved to be very largely justified. Large-scale requisitioning, ill-treatment of local officials, wanton destruction of property, and the desecration of sacred buildings, had combined to produce widespread hatred and contempt for the Japanese; and for this reason, apart from any others, our troops received an obviously genuine welcome in most of the areas we re-occupied.

56. In some of the places we were holding at the beginning of 1944, however, although the goodwill of the villagers was unquestioned, there was an understandable reluctance to show pro-British sympathies prematurely; for many who had spontaneously welcomed Major-General Wingate's forces behind the enemy lines during his 1943 operations had suffered reprisals at the hands of the Japanese when the Long-Range Penetration Group had withdrawn on completion of its operations. It was difficult to predict what reception would be accorded us in the

[1] Robberies or crimes of violence committed by dacoits, members of armed gangs.

[2] This had to be firmly rectified, for it is essential that authorities responsible for Military Administration shall receive all available information as early as possible.

[3] The presence in large numbers of Chinese troops in the N.C.A.C. area presented a special problem; for the local inhabitants claimed to have suffered considerably from looting and other misbehaviour by the Chinese in 1942 and 1943.

plains; for here the Japanese had tried to intimidate the population by publicising the retaliatory measures they had already taken, and by predicting that our troops would again withdraw. We were occasionally greeted with reserve, but when the full weight of our advance became apparent, and the Military Administration was firmly established, a friendly attitude was shown by the Burmese in general; and I repeatedly insisted on the importance of encouraging this by irreproachable conduct towards the local population.

57. During our swift advance through Central and Southern Burma, the removal of the Japanese troops and the breakdown of the puppet administration made the problem of maintaining public order especially difficult. In the newly-occupied areas, skeleton Civil Affairs staffs, arriving to take over administration, were faced with the problem of collecting, rehabilitating, and re-equipping the police force; and in the meantime the inadequate supply of Civil Affairs units afforded every opportunity for unlawful activities. Moreover (and this was particularly the case in Arakan), dacoits and other criminals had large quantities of firearms at their disposal, and were often better armed than the police. Although more police were to be available, together with troops to help them, after the reoccupation of Rangoon, the position of the Civil Affairs officers who had to administer the country at a time when their responsibilities were rapidly increasing but all military energies were concentrated on the capture of Rangoon before the monsoon set in, was by no means an easy one.

58. As the campaign progressed, and more territory came under our jurisdiction, the formation commanders had felt a need for firmer and more expeditious handling of crime among the local population. But they had found it difficult, at first, to appreciate that the Military Administration must maintain the due forms of law, even with the inevitable delay that this entailed. Major-General Pearce, my C.C.A.O.(B.), while recognising the Army's problems, had very naturally continued to insist that the proper requirements of the law should be met; and it can fairly be said that by September, 1944, after very firm orders on the subject had been issued, the position was fully understood by unit commanders in the field. In the course of this process, proposals for changes in the law, particularly as it affected methods of punishment, had been submitted to me. For instance, to meet the commanders' wish that speedier methods of punishment should be provided, and that the problem created by the lack of prison accommodation should be met, it had been suggested to me on the 4th April, 1944 that I should extend the punishment of whipping to the offence of assisting the enemy, and also to certain other offences against persons and property. I had rejected these proposals, which I did not consider in accordance with the spirit of our re-occupation of the country; and I had advised Major-General Pearce that lack of accommodation could be overcome by the institution of camps, similar to prisoner-of-war camps, in which offenders could serve their term until better accommodation became available.

59. The Defence of Burma Act of 1940 already made wide provision for the issue of emergency orders, and for the punishment of acts prejudicial to the successful conduct of the war; and in 1943, after the withdrawal, the Governor had introduced further measures widening the scope of this Act, and providing *inter alia* for the appointment of special judges and the speedier disposal of criminal trials. I was very favourably impressed, throughout the period of Military Administration, with the fairness and thoroughness with which the military courts operated. For although the volume of legal work was constantly increasing, the shortage of legal officers working for the administration remained constant—nevertheless, the interests of accused persons were most conscientiously safeguarded; and the records of all except petty cases were examined officially, after trial, at a higher level, cases of any consequence being considered by Judicial officers at Headquarters. Reviews were frequently ordered; and it can be said that a far greater proportion of cases received reconsideration by superior authority under Military Administration than had done so under Civil Government before the war.

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On the 12th December, 1944, the Secretary of State for Burma had made a statement in the House of Commons on the Government's policy with regard to Burma. Mr. Amery said that the British Government would stand by their promise to give Burma complete self-government as soon as possible, but that he could not make a more precise statement until the liberation of Burma had proceeded further and the course of events was more clear. On the 17th May, 1945 a detailed statement of His Majesty's Government's policy towards Burma after the restoration of Civil Government was made in the House of Commons. The policy was, to assist Burmese political

development until Burma could sustain the responsibility of complete self-government within the British Commonwealth, thereby attaining a status equal to that of the Dominions and of Great Britain. In the meantime, however, the political situation in Burma had been largely coloured by the fact that sections of the population had risen against the Japanese, and that I had received the approval of the War Cabinet to support them.

61. In the telegram to the Chiefs of Staff in which I had asked for approval to support the B.N.A. rising,[1] I had pointed out that there was some danger from the Civil Affairs point of view that offence might be given to the more respectable elements of the population. But I had reminded them that the respectable elements had remained inactive; whilst it was the active, politically conscious, and politically organised elements in the country who were about to undertake the rising. I pointed out, also, that although the leader of the rising, Major-General Aung San, was guilty of treason, since he had collaborated with the Japanese, he was one of those whose political convictions had led them to suppose that the true interests of their country lay in getting the Japanese to grant them political freedom. They had been mistaken; and their present course of action showed that they knew it. I submitted, therefore, that in supporting this rising against the Japanese we should be doing no more than what had been done in Italy, and other European countries, where the satellites of a power that had let them down had been accepted as co-belligerents on our side. When these Burmans became national heroes (as those who fought the Japanese occupying forces were bound to become) we should have largely taken the wind out of their sails by having created a situation in which they would be national heroes with the British rather than against them. Finally, I stressed that any policy which might lead to our having to suppress the Resistance movement by force would have a grave effect on the civil re-organisation of the country; at the same time I assured the Chiefs of Staff that I intended to leave the Military Administration, and eventually the Civil Government, as free a hand as possible to deal with the political situations in Burma as they found them.

62. Early in April, 1945, when we had already recovered more than half the territory of Burma, and when there was a good chance that most of the remainder of the country would be cleared within the next few months, I held a series of meetings with Lieut.-General Leese, senior Civil Affairs officers, and Sir John Wise, acting Civil Governor,[2] to make known my policy for the Military Administration of the country. In view of His Majesty's Government's proclaimed policy of moving towards self-government for Burma soon after the war, I considered it my duty to avoid prejudicing the situation which would confront the Civil Government on its return. And I was convinced that not only the future of Burma (the first British territory to be re-occupied), but also the reputation of British administration in the eyes of the world would depend on our handling of the A.F.O.—or Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (A.F.P.F.L.) as it had now been re-named.

63. At these meetings, I recalled that in 1942, when we were outfought by the Japanese and compelled by military necessity to abandon the country, conditions in Burma had been confused; and that the nationalist elements, being unarmed, disorganised and at the mercy of the Japanese, not unnaturally collaborated with the enemy, when promised the independence of Burma. This promise was soon seen to be a mockery; and the people of Burma had turned on their so-called "liberators". If the political leaders of the A.F.P.F.L., and their followers who were fighting in the B.N.A., had decided that they would get a fairer deal from the British, I felt that it was my duty to see that they should not have to revise this opinion. I also recalled that Great Britain's traditional policy of leniency and conciliation, in similar circumstances in the past, had convinced outstanding ex-enemy leaders like Generals Smuts and Botha that there was not necessarily any contradiction between British interests and their own; and I said that it seemed to me that it would be a grave and far-reaching error not to convince the Burmese, in their present attitude of mind towards us, of the sincerity of our desire to help them to help themselves.[3]

64. I made it clear at these meetings that, while taking into consideration the views of my Civil Affairs officers and those which Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and his advisers had expressed to me from time to time, I reserved to myself all policy decisions to be taken in South-East Asia. I was determined that no section of the Burmese people should be able to

[1] See 'B', paragraph 495.

[2] In the temporary absence of Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith.

[3] See Appendix F. I also issued a directive dated the 30th June, 1945 for guidance in dealing with those suspected of having collaborated with the enemy. This laid down that persons in positions of authority who had incited others to resist our return, or who had participated in acts of oppression against the local population, should be treated with exemplary severity. On the other hand, lenient treatment should be accorded those who, in subordinate positions had simply obeyed orders or followed the example of others.

claim that we were returning to the country in a spirit of revenge or reprisal. My policy would be based on a strict enforcement of public order; but I did not propose that crimes—particularly those committed during or immediately after the Japanese occupation—should be dealt with without full consideration of the circumstances. I directed that Civil Affairs officers must observe the distinction between civil crimes against the person and political misdemeanours.

65. These views were embodied in policy directives to all Civil Affairs officers, in which I reserved to myself personally the right to confirm the death sentence in all cases of crime against the State or with political implications. I instructed Major-General Pearce to report to me, with his recommendations, the circumstances of any prosecution with political implications which involved the death sentence; and to await my comments before any such sentence was carried out. He was also to report to me immediately the circumstances of any prosecution, resulting in a sentence other than death, which might be regarded as having political implications. I was not proposing to interfere with any straightforward criminal cases, or institute any form of "legal review"; but I required full details of any "political" cases, or any in which there were any other unusual complications, so as to be able to keep a personal watching brief.

66. When the question of allowing Force 136 to continue arming members of the B.N.A. had arisen, certain of my advisers on Civil Affairs had opposed this because they were afraid of the prejudicial effect it might have on the internal security of the country. I fully realised that the possession of firearms by the Burmese constituted a potential danger. But it had only been proposed to distribute up to 3,000 arms, under a controlled scheme, in central and lower Burma; and these additional arms in the hands of the population would be negligible in relation to the arms which they had held before the war, and which had been augmented by arms recovered during the British retreat in 1942 and during the present Japanese reverses. I now issued a policy directive for the maintenance of public order in the case of dacoities; and I instructed Civil Affairs officers that all firearms issued by British and U.S. liaison officers should be recovered. Others were to be collected: by means of an offer to pay at specified rates for all firearms found, looted, or issued by the Japanese, if these were turned in at specified places by a specified date.

67. I issued an amendment to the Weapons Proclamation, prescribing five years' imprisonment, or a fine, or both, as the maximum penalty for illicit possession of arms: this having been the penalty in force, under the Defence of Burma Act 1940, when I had assumed responsibility for the Military Administration on the 1st January, 1944. Major-General Pearce was asked to submit to me all proclamations already issued, and to draw my attention to any which introduced new penalties or increased the existing ones. Finally, I issued a directive forbidding the Military Administration to enhance any existing penalties as prescribed by the law of Burma on the 1st January, 1944, or to introduce new ones, without my express authority, personally signed.

68. When Rangoon fell, I was strongly urged by certain officers of my Civil Affairs staff to declare the A.F.P.F.L. illegal; and it was suggested to me that since U Aung San would now be of little value from the operational point of view, his record demanded that he should be treated as a war criminal and placed under arrest pending trial. I had no intention, however, of provoking a minor civil war in an area in which I was not only conducting a campaign but which I would be using as a base for further campaigns. On the 15th May, I telegraphed to the Chiefs of Staff that we had now over-run all B.N.A. units in the field, and asked for guidance. I suggested that since the B.N.A. was an organised force, properly recruited and uniformed,[1] it should be regularised; and that I should be authorised to issue a proclamation that all guerrilla forces in Burma, including the B.N.A., having fought on our side, would now come under the command of A.L.F.S.E.A. and be subject to Military Law. If they were regarded as part of the Allied Forces, with pay and an appropriate scale of military rations, discipline could then be enforced on a military basis; and care would be taken to ensure that their senior officers participated in dealing with serious breaches of discipline. Any armed bands in Burma who neither acknowledged Major-General Aung San's authority, nor were led by Force 136, nor had been raised for fighting the Japanese, could then be treated as dacoits and dealt with accordingly.

69. The regular Burma Army was now in process of being reconstituted, and I intended to give those guerrillas who could pass the necessary medical and other examinations the chance of enrolling; the remainder could then be gradually disarmed and disbanded, as and when the Japanese had been completely cleared from the area. Although the

[1] My source of information was Volume I of "Burma during the Japanese Occupation", issued by H.E. the Governor of Burma, October, 1943 (pages 59–61).

implementation of this policy might meet with difficulties, I urged that it was worth retaining on our side those elements who had risen spontaneously against the Japanese; and I submitted that the only alternative I could see to the policy was to declare the B.N.A. illegal. We would then find ourselves up against a formation of something like 10,000 armed Burmese, organised into companies and battalions, under their own officers. Since Lieut.-General Leese estimated at this time that operations against the B.N.A., working in conjunction with isolated Japanese parties which had not been mopped up, would tie down about two divisions—over and above what we were planning to keep in Burma for current operations—the effect of such a diversion of effort would have been most serious.

70. On the 16th May, Major-General Aung San came over to our lines and was taken to see Lieut.-General Slim. I had given my approval of this, but had made it clear that the terms of my directive of 31st March from the Chiefs of Staff (as approved by the War Cabinet) must be closely followed in all dealings with him. Major-General Aung San announced that he considered himself the military representative of the Provisional Government of Burma, set up by the A.F.P.F.L., in which he held the post of Minister of War: that it was as an Allied commander that he had come to treat with us, and that he was not empowered to take any decisions with regard to the future of the B.N.A. without consulting the Council of the A.F.P.F.L. Policy decisions, whether military or political, could only be taken by the Council, whose aims, pronounced in August, 1944, were: to establish a democratic constitution for Burma, with full political, economic and social rights for its people; to co-operate actively with the Allies in driving the Japanese out of Burma; and to continue active assistance to the Allies, against Japan, beyond the Burmese border.

71. Lieut.-General Slim, who handled this difficult interview most skilfully, explained that no Civil Government of any kind could operate as long as the Military Administration was in force; but he suggested to Major-General Aung San that his army should become part of the future defence force of Burma under the terms of the India and Burma Army Act. Major-General Aung San replied that he was unwilling to owe allegiance to anybody except his Provisional Government; but that he was prepared to place his army under the Allied Commander in the field as a recognised ally. As Allied Commander in the field, Lieut.-General Slim thereupon asked for precise information immediately of the strength and dispositions of the B.N.A.; and Major-General Aung San agreed to comply with this request.

72. I informed the British Chiefs of Staff of this, and asked for their instructions before taking further action. Although the fiction of a provisional government—which appeared to be a question of "face", and partly dictated by uncertainty of what to do next—could not for one moment be entertained,[1] I felt that it would be unrealistic not to treat the A.F.P.F.L. as what it was: a coalition of the political parties commanding the largest following in the territory where I was engaged in conducting operations. I therefore suggested to Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith that Lieut.-General Slim might be allowed to tell Major-General Aung San that His Excellency would consider the eventual inclusion of members of the A.F.P.F.L. in his Executive Council, when Civil Government was restored; but Sir Reginald telegraphed that he could not for a moment contemplate giving an undertaking to consider this.

73. On the 22nd May, I received further instructions from the Chiefs of Staff, who agreed that it was out of the question that the B.N.A. should be declared illegal; they laid down that the question should be dealt with in two phases. In the first, I was authorised (so far as was useful to my operations) to continue employing the B.N.A., within their own organisations, for mopping-up operations in areas where this was feasible; and if it would effectively prevent them from levying supplies on the countryside, I was to provide pay and rations, which were to be issued to their leaders for distribution. In the second phase (which in any given area would begin when I had no further immediate operational need for them), they were to be kept under control so that their arms could be collected. For this, they should be maintained in holding centres and organised (preferably under British Army officers, if possible) as guerrilla or auxiliary forces forming part of, and subordinate to the British forces in Burma; they should also be placed on nominal rolls, for notification and rationing purposes.

74. The Chiefs of Staff emphasised the importance of this last point; and suggested that the men should be informed that they were being maintained in these centres for the time being in case further need should arise for their services against the enemy—particularly since Major-General Aung San had made them available for service outside Burma. They were further to be told that when Civil Government had been

[1] The claim died a natural death.

restored, the opportunity might arise for volunteers from the B.N.A. to be enrolled in the regular Burma Army. The Chiefs of Staff instructed that police officers of C.A.S.(B.) should investigate, with the aid of the nominal rolls, any case in which charges could be framed of atrocities against British subjects, or of violent crimes of a heinous nature. Those against whom charges were laid were to be sorted out and detained pending further consideration; the remainder who would no doubt form the great majority, should remain in the holding centres for the time being, since it was important for internal security that their arms should be recovered and that they should remain under control until such time as the Civil Government could decide their future.

75. On the 30th May, I held a meeting in my Rear Headquarters with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, which was attended by Lieut.-Generals Leese, Slim and Stopford, and by the new C.C.A.O.(B.), Major-General H. E. (later Sir Hubert) Rance[1] (who had succeeded Major-General Pearce on the 10th May). At this meeting it was agreed that there would be no political censorship on the activities of the B.N.A.; but that guidance should be given to our own military observers and to the Psychological Warfare Department, to confine themselves to stories of a factual nature. It was also agreed that the forces under the command of Major-General Aung San were to be re-named[2]; and that the Government of Burma was to attach a liaison officer to the Headquarters of the newly-formed Twelfth Army, at Rangoon.

76. On the 11th June, Lieut.-General Stopford telegraphed me that he had had an interview with Major-General Aung San, whom he had found most co-operative. Lieut.-General Stopford had invited him to visit all divisional commands to discuss the general implementation, re-grouping and administration of the B.N.A. now operating in the field; and Major-General Aung San had said that he was anxious to do this as he would get first-hand knowledge of the local situation, and be able to issue orders. Lieut.-General Stopford said he would try to help the re-grouping and repatriation of personnel resigning from the B.N.A., by providing transport. Major-General Aung San hoped, however, that it would be possible to employ the maximum number of forces in the field, in preference to disbanding them; adding that he was not recruiting locally, and did not propose to start doing so again.

77. On the 15th June, the Victory Parade took place at Rangoon; and the British flag which was seized from the Port Commissioners' building by the Japanese, and which had now been returned through General Marshall and the C.I.G.S., was ceremonially re-hoisted. The Burmese flag was among those flown at the saluting-base; and the units representing British Empire and Allied forces included detachments selected from the guerrilla forces which had operated under Force 136, and a detachment of the B.N.A.

78. Next day, I received some fifty prominent citizens of Rangoon. Major-General Aung San and Thakin Than Tun, Secretary of the A.F.P.F.L., had particularly asked for a separate interview; and on the advice of Mr. T. L. Hughes (Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith's representative), I received them privately in the presence of Lieut.-General Stopford, Major-General Rance and Mr. Hughes, for an informal talk. They both assured me that the A.F.P.F.L. genuinely wished to co-operate whole-heartedly with the Military Administration.[3] I reminded them that, although services rendered in the common cause would be accounted in favour of any individual who was arrested and charged, any member of the A.F.P.F.L. or the B.N.A. was still liable for past misdeeds; and I stressed the fact that in some districts armed bands who were—or who claimed to be—members of the B.N.A. were giving considerable trouble.

79. Major-General Aung San undertook to issue written orders to any such units, instructing them to obey the orders of my local military commander, even to the extent of giving up their arms and being disbanded at Lieut.-General Stopford's request. He agreed that, if they failed to carry out his orders, this would be tantamount to mutiny; and that they could then be treated as mutineers, or dacoits, and be dealt with by the military commander. I then informed Major-General Aung San and Thakin Than Tun that the regular Burma Army was to be reconstituted round a nucleus of such units as 2 Burma Regiment, Burma Signals and other Burmese units who had come out with us to India; and that it was the wish of His Majesty's Government that it should include elements of the B.N.A. and of other indigenous guerrilla units, drawn from all the races of Burma.

80. They both agreed in principle about the enrolment of suitable volunteers, and Major-General

[1] Appointed Governor of Burma in August, 1946.

[2] On the 29th June, Sir Reginald concurred in his proposal that they should be re-named the "Patriot Burmese Forces" (P.B.F.).

[3] Lieut.-General Stopford told me in conversation that the B.N.A. rising had been of undoubted military value, and that on the whole the B.N.A. had been co-operating well with the Civil Affairs organisation.

Aung San asked that this should start at once. He also asked that disbanded members of the B.N.A., who had fought for us but were not required in the Burma Army, might be given a gratuity or back-pay, which would enable them to support themselves until they found employment and keep them out of mischief in the meantime. This seemed to me a sound suggestion, and I instructed Lieut.-General Leese to act on it.

81. On the day following the Victory Parade, I also held a meeting with Civil Affairs officers drawn from all areas, and down to the level of Lieutenant-Colonel. Most of them were tackling the difficult problems confronting them with realism, good sense, and skill; but I was determined not to tolerate divergence from my policy at any level, and in order to enable those at administrative level to carry it out in the letter as well as in the spirit, I took this opportunity of explaining it personally, and of answering questions on points that needed clarification.

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Major-General Rance had arrived in Rangoon from Calcutta two days before the Victory Parade; and although he had at this time only a small number of Civil Affairs officers in the Rangoon area and practically all his departments were in Calcutta, he decided to stay on the spot and his departments from Calcutta started to join him towards the end of the month—though, owing to shipping difficulties, they did not all arrive until August. Almost immediately after his arrival, Major-General Rance started an Advisory Council, which held fortnightly meetings, and when his administrative departments arrived from Calcutta he also formed a number of sub-committees of the Advisory Council, for Civil Supplies, Agriculture, etc.

83. By the end of June, G.H.Q. (I.) and H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A. were engaged in reconstituting the regular Burma Army. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and I were agreed that, since this reconstitution must take place in Burma, it should be handled by H.Q. A.L.F.S.E.A.; and I therefore arranged with General Auchinleck, at a meeting on the 23rd June, that the reconstitution machinery should be transferred. It was decided that a British Inspector-General, holding the rank of Major-General, should be appointed to the Burma Army, and that there should be two Deputy Inspectors-General, with the rank of Brigadier.

84. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith welcomed the proposal that suitable members of the Patriot Burmese Forces (as the B.N.A. was now re-named) be given the chance to enrol. We agreed that this enrolment should take effect before the restoration of Civil Government; and steps were accordingly taken to work out the details is accordance with the instructions I had received from the Chiefs of Staff. Since Major-General Aung San had given military assistance to the Allies (and because it might induce large numbers of the P.B.F. to enrol) I invited Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith to offer him one of the posts of D.I.G. at the appropriate time, and to grant him a commission as Brigadier in the Burma Army[1]; at the same time I agreed the suggestion that the second post of D.I.G. should be offered to an officer selected from the other indigenous guerrilla forces.

85. At the meeting in Delhi on the 30th May, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and I had agreed that it would be of great value if he held a meeting with the leaders of the political parties in Burma, in order to explain to them the policy of His Majesty's Government as set out in their recently issued White Paper. The meeting could be held on board a British warship in the Rangoon River; an expedient which would avoid H.E. the Governor's setting foot on Burmese territory before he had resumed responsibility for Government, and which would obviate the politically undesirable course of bringing Burmese representatives out of the country. On the 11th June, the Chiefs of Staff approved the proposed meeting. They suggested that, since Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith would be inviting representatives of all parties, he might wish to see them either all together or in separate groups; and that in the latter event he should have opportunity for a series of meetings. They also authorised me, since the actual handling of the Burmese leaders would for some time remain my responsibility, to send representatives to the meeting. I replied that I was leaving an entirely free hand to Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, in regard to the meetings he might wish to hold; and that I proposed to send Lieut.-General Stopford, and Lieut.-General Browning, my Chief of Staff, as my military representatives.

86. I informed Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith that I realised that, if only representatives of the A.F.P.F.L.

[1] When, with H.E. the Governor's concurrence, I made this offer in the following September, Major-General Aung San declined it, stating that he had decided to abandon his military career and confine himself to politics.

and the P.B.F. attended the meeting, it might seem that some measure of recognition was being accorded to the self-styled provisional government—though in point of fact no more had been heard of this body—and that I therefore entirely favoured Sir Reginald's inviting as many delegates as he wished from the less active political parties. At the same time, I considered that the only potential trouble-makers were the politically active elements (of whom only the A.F.P.F.L. and the P.B.F. had so far manifested themselves); and that my official interest in the proposed meeting lay mainly in the opportunity it would give for discussion with these elements. I pointed out that if the representatives of these groupings were invited individually, it would leave a loop-hole for the parties subsequently to repudiate any agreements reached, by claiming that the representatives were not nominated by them and were therefore not authorised to negotiate on their behalf; I hoped, therefore, that the A.F.P.F.L. and P.B.F. would not only be invited, but told to nominate their own representatives.

87. The meeting took place on board H.M.S. CUMBERLAND in the Rangoon River on the 20th June, and was reported to me by Lieut.-General Browning as having been very successful. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith propounded His Majesty's Government's policy for handing over to the Burmese people the responsibility for government of their country, and reaffirmed his intention to call on the national representatives to assist him in the government of the country when Civil Government was restored. He emphasised that these representatives would act not merely in an advisory capacity, but would have executive posts and responsibility; adding that although Burma was still a large-scale battleground, he did not think the day was very far distant when the Civil Government would start to function again, since he and I were both anxious that this should happen.

88. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith and I had agreed in principle, at the meeting in Delhi on the 30th May, that it would not be necessary that the whole of Burma should be liberated before this was done—provided that the country's transportation service was working satisfactorily, and that I could retain full use of Rangoon and its surroundings as a base for mounting further operations. But I was reluctant to hand over responsibility for the country before it was properly re-organised, and until I could spare some military resources to help the Civil Government in its task of rehabilitation.

89. My directive from the Chiefs of Staff on 28th December, 1943, had stated that it was the policy of His Majesty's Government that civil administration should be transferred to the civil authorities as soon as, and in so far as, conditions were such as to enable the latter to function; and that it would be for me to recommend when, and for what area, such transfer could take place without embarrassment to military operations. In deference, therefore, to Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith's strong request, I ordered, on the 17th July, that an agreed plan for the eventual transfer of responsibility should be prepared with Sir Reginald's designated representatives; and Major-General Rance was instructed to form a joint "Burma Handing-over Commission." A month later, Japan capitulated, and resistance in Burma came to an end.

90. It had been stipulated that the disbandment of the P.B.F. should start on 30th June; and that, simultaneously, enlistment in the regular Burma Army should be thrown open to eligible personnel, who would be allowed to retain their arms, but must keep them in the appointed armouries except when they were needed for training purposes. All necessary arrangements for putting this agreement into effect had been completed, on our side, by the end of June, but in July and August, the disbandment of the P.B.F. and the calling-in of their arms did not proceed as satisfactorily as had been hoped; and it was reported to me that the Burmese were procrastinating. At the beginning of September, therefore, I summoned the leaders of the A.F.P.F.L. and the P.B.F. to Kandy; where a series of meetings was held, at which they were called on to explain the causes of their delay in carrying out the terms of the agreement. Major-General Aung San gave an account of the activities of the Patriot Burmese Forces; he then gave the reasons for the delay which had occurred in carrying out the terms of the agreement made in June. This he ascribed to various disagreements and misunderstandings with my own officers, which had led him to believe that we were not keeping our side of the agreement; but I was able to clear up these points. The absorption of the P.B.F. by the Burma Army was then discussed; and at staff meetings the same day between Lieut.-General Stopford and Major-General Aung San an agreement was drawn up, covering detailed procedure,[1] and was signed by Major-General Aung San and Thakin Than Tun.

[1] On 9th May, 1946, His Excellency the Governor, fulfilling a personal promise I made at this meeting, agreed (subject to his authority to do so being established) to grant 200 commissions to ex-P.B.F. officers; in spite of the fact that the recruitment of other ranks had not been proportionate.

91. At Kandy, Thakin Than Tun volunteered the full support of the A.F.P.F.L. and of the P.B.F. in collecting arms throughout Burma; and I considered that the meetings had constituted an important step in the resettlement of the country. I had explained to the delegates that I would raise no political questions in the course of the discussions, since these were a matter for His Excellency the Governor; but I made it clear that until the disbandment of the P.B.F. was complete, and their arms handed in, I could not begin to consider handing over the country to Civil Government. Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, who had come to Kandy to discuss the question of the hand-over to Civil Government, did not attend these meetings in person; but his Counsellor, Sir Raibeart MacDougall, was present in the capacity of observer.

92. A parallel series of conferences had been held in Kandy on the subject of the Hand-over. In addition to having informal discussions with Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith alone, and with him in the presence of my Commanders-in-Chief, I held formal meetings at which the Staffs were present. When Sir Reginald arrived in Kandy, I had told him that in the opinion of my Commanders-in-Chief, as well as my own, the return of Civil Government at this stage would be premature. There was still a large number of Japanese in Tenasserim and the Karenni States who had not been rounded up; and it might even be necessary to undertake further land and air operations if—as seemed at that moment possible—the local Japanese commanders disobeyed the surrender orders of their superiors. Moreover, for as long as large numbers of the troops were engaged in rounding-up the Japanese, the disarmament and disbandment of the P.B.F. would be a problem; and it was essential that there should be no trouble during the period when Japanese were being disarmed.

93. Sir Reginald considered, however, that now that Japan had surrendered and the fighting in Burma was over, the long-term policy for which he was responsible demanded the restoration of Civil Government as early as possible; and he renewed in the strongest terms his request to be allowed to return. Major-General Rance had reported to me that the considered views of the heads of his departments were that the early return of Civil Government would be premature, and should be postponed until the end of the year. But there could be no doubt that the early return of the Civil Government was favoured by the Burmese people as a whole. Their expectations that the restoration of British administration would at once be followed by a return to pre-war conditions, had not materialised; and they were hoping that the return of Civil Government would bring them favours which the Military Administration had been unable or unwilling to confer. When I had asked the A.F.P.F.L. representatives their views, they too had clearly intimated that they hoped Civil Government would soon be restored.

94. I realised that, since I expected the rounding-up of the Japanese (at all events in most of the country) to be completed very soon, my military reasons for not acceding to Sir Reginald's request would soon lapse. While warning Sir Reginald, therefore, that it was my considered opinion that it would be to the advantage of all concerned if Military Administration continued at least until the end of the year, I felt compelled to instruct my staff to draw up, together with Sir Reginald's representatives, an agreed procedure by which H.E. the Governor would return to Burma on the 1st October, or as soon after this as might be conveniently arranged.

95. Under this agreement H.E. the Governor was to exercise responsibility in Burma, except in the few areas in which the Japanese had not yet been rounded up and disarmed. On the 8th September, in communicating the text of this agreement to the Chiefs of Staff, I set out Sir Reginald's views in the matter and stated that, now that the war was over, I did not feel that I had any military justification in resisting H.E.'s strong recommendations. I stressed that the request for the transfer came from H.E. the Governor, who was prepared to assume complete responsibility and would deal with any civil troubles which might occur, by invoking the aid of the forces in Burma—which would, however, remain under my command. The approval of His Majesty's Government to this agreement was received at the beginning of October; and His Excellency the Governor with a proportion of his staff arrived in Rangoon in H.M.S. CLEOPATRA, and resumed responsibility for the Government of Burma—except in the Tenasserim Civil Division (less the Toungoo district) and the Karenni States—on 16th October, 1945.

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### Postscript

When I handed over my responsibilities to His Excellency the Governor of Burma, only seven of the administrative departments[1] could be transferred to Civil Government, because a large number of Government servants, who were working in the remaining departments, were still required by the Military Administration; and in many Districts and departments the essential work of the Military Administration was still incomplete—in some, it had not even begun. There were still many difficulties to be overcome in connection with personnel, food supply, stores and equipment, accommodation, and road transport. The returning Civil Government, for example, had no road transport organisation, and was entirely dependent on the Army.[2]

97. Tenasserim was cut off from the remainder of Burma, for the key bridge over the Sittang at Mokpalin had been demolished and the equally important ferry across the Salween at Moulmein had been rendered useless; and entry could be effected only by sea. But it took some time before the sea route could be used, as all the ports had first to be cleared of mines, and we were very short of ships for this purpose. Minesweeping and surveying of the Tenasserim ports was begun, however, as soon as vessels could be spared from higher priority tasks: but the work presented considerable difficulty, for the coastal waters and approaches were shallow, and the water brackish—while at Moulmein the ship channel had altered its course very considerably in the past four years.[3]

98. The main concern of the Handing-over Commission was now to ensure that the transfer, from time to time, of responsibility for the various public services should be effected as smoothly as possible. But the administrative machine, which had been beginning to function smoothly, received a set-back. In the first place, the country was still sufficiently unsettled for well-armed bands of dacoits to be operating in certain areas, and the morale and discipline of the civil police was not yet at a pitch where it could be asked to operate efficiently on its own. Under the Military Administration, responsibility for public order had rested with the military; and the integration of troops and police, which ensured quick and effective action, had been greatly instrumental in building up police morale; which was extremely poor as a result of the Japanese occupation.

99. With the re-introduction of Civil Government, however, peace-time procedure had returned; responsibility for public order now rested with the Civil Administration, and troops were available to support the police, when required. But the police were diffident about asking for military support; while the military, now absolved from this responsibility, sometimes found it difficult to comply with requests for assistance, since they were very busy with training and the local organisation of units. Another disadvantage occasioned by the premature hand-over was the delay that now arose in the disposal of judicial work; for all trials that could not be completed before the courts of the Military Administration were superseded, had to be postponed. This caused confusion and hardship; witnesses who had been carefully collected, now had to be dispersed, and the local lock-ups became over-crowded. Here again, the delay of a few more weeks could have ensured a smooth hand-over.

100. By the end of the year, the re-occupation of the new areas had been completed, the majority of the administrative departments had returned to Civil Government and conditions in the Tenasserim and Karenni areas were such that I considered that my final responsibility could be relinquished. On the 1st January, 1946, therefore, I issued a Proclamation withdrawing British Military Administration Proclamation No. 1; and the whole of Burma was thus brought under Civil Administration. On the 1st February, since very few Civil Affairs departments by that time remained militarised, His Excellency the Governor of Burma and I agreed that the Hand-over Commission should be dissolved as from that day; and Major-General Rance relinquished his appointment of Director of Civil Affairs (Burma).[4]

[1] General Administration (less the Tenasserim Division); Judicial; Police; Agriculture; Education; Publicity (less Radio Technical and Reception Units, Films, and Field Publicity Units); and Revenue.

[2] The Department of Civil Supplies, including the Road Transport Organisation, did not return to Civil Government until the 1st April, 1946.

[3] This port, the last to be opened on the coast, could be worked with lighters by mid-March, 1946; and ships could proceed alongside by April.

[4] His title had been changed from Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Burma) to Director of Civil Affairs (Burma) at the request of the War Office.

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### Tribute

Before proceeding to record the conclusions I came to during my two and three-quarter years in South-East Asia, I wish to take the opportunity which this summary gives me, of paying a deep and sincere tribute to those whom I had the honour to command. It was on the Indian troops, and on the high proportion of British with them, that the main brunt of the land fighting fell; and no words of mine could adequately express the unfaltering loyalty and courage of these men. But there were Americans, Canadians, Australians, South Africans, East and West Africans, Ceylonese, French, Dutch, Chinese, and a Belgian medical unit: men and women of many races, nationalities, and creeds, who were united and unflagging in devoted and selfless service—whether they were engaged in actively fighting, or in supporting those who did so.

2. First of all, I wish especially to mention the officers and men of the Fourteenth Army, with their unsurpassed record of service and achievement; and their commander, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, now Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Together with the British 15 Corps in Arakan and the U.S.–Chinese forces on the N.C.A.C. front, they relentlessly forced the Japanese back across the formidable mountains and jungles of Northern and Western Burma, under monsoon conditions; and finally chased them on to the central plains, where they inflicted on them the major land defeat of the war in the Far East.

3. Next, I wish to mention the late Major-General Wingate's Special Force—the Chindits—who, magnificently supported and supplied by Colonel Cochrane's Air Commando, first proved that the Japanese could be out-fought in the jungle, and beaten at their own game of infiltration; and with them I wish to couple the (necessarily unadvertised) part played by the gallant Intelligence and guerrilla forces within the enemy's territory. I must also mention the late General Stilwell's remarkable training, and courageous handling of the Chinese Armies serving in the N.C.A.C.; as well as the important part played by U.S. Army Engineers on road projects and airfield construction.

4. It is essential, also, that the vital and decisive contribution of the other services should not be underestimated. I have pointed out in this Report that although the progress in a combined campaign is most easily measured by the Army's advance—and an operational narrative tends to become a chronological account of the ebb and flow of the land battle—air operations form the background, and the unceasing accompaniment, to the land fighting. As a result of our establishing air supremacy, air transport on a very great scale was made possible; and it was air-supply which alone made the campaign in Burma a feasible proposition. Among the great feats of air-supply were the maintenance of the Chindits (often under close-range fire, and at a distance of some 150 miles inside enemy territory) for approximately three months; the maintenance of five divisions in the Imphal area for about two months (partly during monsoon weather); the flying out of 50,000 useless mouths during the siege of Imphal; and the major proportion of the supply of the advanced formations of the Fourteenth Army during its spectacular advance from Imphal to Rangoon. In all this, it is hardly possible to overstress the importance of the air superiority which was established early in 1944, and the maintenance of which alone made possible these great feats of air transport—so large a proportion of which were carried out by the Americans. One can in fact trace a direct sequence from the victories of the Spitfires, through the subsequent exploits of the American long-range fighters, down to the capture of Rangoon. For this I wish to pay tribute to the Allied Air Forces, which throughout 1945 were under the bold leadership of Air Chief Marshal Park. The operations in Burma were directly under Lieut.-General Stratemeyer, who had the loyal support of his Air Commanders—American and British alike—and provided an outstanding example of how an Allied Air Commander should conduct himself.

5. Victory in South-East Asia, on land and in the air, was built on the firm foundation of the security of our sea communications; for no combination of land and air forces could have succeeded if our merchant ships to, and within, the Command had ceased to function regularly and efficiently. This security was guaranteed, in co-operation with our maritime Air Forces, by the Allied Fleet—for, although by far the greater part of the Fleet was British, there were Indian, Australian, South African, American, French and Dutch warships in the Command. In addition to protecting sea-communications, the Allied Fleet transported and maintained our land forces on the Arakan front—as well as undertaking

a series of minor (but unusual and extremely difficult) amphibious operations in the Arakan *chaungs*; and finally mounting a large-scale sea-borne assault on Rangoon. It was the Navy which established the sea and air superiority over the Japanese in preparation for the assault on Malaya; when the enemy's sea communications were cut by sea forces as effectively as his land communications were being cut by air forces. I owe a deep debt to Admiral Sir Arthur Power for the bold and generous manner in which he employed the naval forces under his command in whole-hearted participation in theatre strategy.

6. No tribute to the Royal Navy would be complete without a mention of the sister service, the Merchant Navy; and in particular of the tankers, store-ships, and transports operating within the Bay of Bengal, which carried on their vital service of transport and supply in the face of every difficulty and danger.

7. I do not propose to catalogue the Commanders nor the Staff Officers of my own Headquarters to whom I owe, and wish to pay, tribute—for such a list would be almost identical with the list of the senior officers of South-East Asia Command[1]. But I must express my lasting gratitude to my own Headquarters Staff; and in particular to my two Chiefs of Staff, Lieut.-Generals Pownall and Browning, as well as to my two principal U.S. Staff Officers, Lieut.-Generals Wheeler and Wedemeyer. In my first draft of this Report, I had failed to include a special section of tributes; for it has sometimes seemed to me that the conventional series of acknowledgments appears to be a routine matter and tends to nullify the purpose it sets out to achieve. Before I had finished revising the draft, however, I realised that I could not let the Report go into print without saying how proud and how grateful I am for the loyal and inspiring support which I received at every level in the Command. My difficulty has been to find phrases that would adequately convey the depth and sincerity of my appreciation.

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### Chain of Command and Location of Headquarters[2]

During my whole time in South-East Asia, I tried to take an objective view of the system of Supreme Allied Command, compared with the system which previously obtained in the theatre. I discussed its advantages and disadvantages with nearly all the senior officers in the Command, and with several in the neighbouring Commands; and although in the first few months divergent views were expressed, I found when the capacity of the system for dealing with the problems confronting us was put to the test, that an increasing majority gave it their unqualified support. My own opinion, which I wish to record very strongly, is that the system of Supreme Allied Command provided the best, if not the only, method of dealing with the variety and complexity of inter-Allied and inter-service matters involved.

9. I have not heard any responsible officer contest the view that a Supreme Allied Commander is needed in a war in which Allies are engaged in large numbers in the same theatre; but quite apart from the value of a Supreme Command when fighting with Allies, a Supreme Commander can effect the co-ordination of the three British fighting services in a way that a Committee of Commanders-in-Chief is never likely to do.[3] I do not believe that a Committee composed of the respective Commanders-in-Chief, even if it had been under the chairmanship of a Minister of State, could have functioned with the advantages which the Supreme Allied Commander enjoyed. At a meeting of a Commanders-in-Chiefs' Committee, two Commanders-in-Chief cannot out-vote the third on any matter concerning his own service; even though the third Commander-in-Chief may be withholding certain resources which they regard as an essential part of a combined plan; so any failure to agree involves reference either to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in London or to a civilian authority set over them, such as a Minister of State—who is unlikely to be a military expert, or to have an adequate military staff to help him.

10. For the Supreme Commander has on his staff, officers who take an inter-service, overall view, and who already have (or soon acquire) sufficient knowledge of the working of the other services to be able

[1] See Annexure 9 (page 259).
[2] See 'A', paragraphs 12-15.
[3] I doubt, for instance, whether the Whitworth-Jones Committee on Army/Air co-operation, or the Denning Committee on Air and Ground Supply, would have been set up (or at all events, set up so early) if they had not been sponsored by a Supreme Headquarters.

to approach problems from a non-parochial point of view. The system of a Joint Planning Staff of integrated Allied officers of each service, shared between the Allied Commanders-in-Chief and the Supreme Allied Commander[1] is an essential ingredient to successful inter-service inter-Allied planning; and gives the Supreme Allied Commander the best hold over theatre planning whilst ensuring that the views of his three principal service advisers (the three Commanders-in-Chief) are always adequately represented. Further, a number of problems have to be dealt with in a theatre (such as Psychological Warfare, operations behind the enemy lines, Economic Intelligence, Photographic Reconnaissance, etc.) which are best handled by a Supreme Headquarters.

11. If an Allied C.-in-C. wishes to be absent from the main group of headquarters for any appreciable time (whether on tour, or with a tactical headquarters in the forward area, or at sea) it must be quite clearly laid down that he shall nominate a deputy or representative to stay at the main group of headquarters, who is authorised to give the service advice which it is the duty of the C.-in-C. to place at the Supreme Allied Commander's disposal. Of course, if the matter under discussion is one on which the representative or deputy is insufficiently briefed (and is not urgent) it should be left for discussion until all the Commanders-in-Chief can be present in person: but if it is urgent, the absent Commander-in-Chief must clearly understand that the Supreme Allied Commander will have to rely on the advice of the deputy or representative.

12. Since, in the last analysis, it is the Supreme Allied Commander who alone takes all high-level decisions, and issues the final orders, an urgent decision taken in the absence of a Commander-in-Chief becomes binding on the latter. If he is forward with a tactical headquarters, or at sea in a flagship, he may find orders passed to his forces which they must obey even though, owing to his absence, he himself could not be consulted before they were issued. It is therefore highly undesirable for an Allied Commander-in-Chief to be absent for long periods (either at an advanced or tactical headquarters, or at sea). A Naval Commander-in-Chief should therefore normally have his headquarters ashore, when serving under a Supreme Allied Commander; for, in particular, owing to the fact that ships at sea keep "wireless silence," a Naval C.-in-C. will be even more cut off when at sea than his colleagues on tour. The other Commanders-in-Chief can telegraph their views, even though these may be delayed by their movements—whereas the Admiral will rarely be willing to break wireless silence in order to send advice.

13. The absence of the Supreme Allied Commander must also be allowed for. If he goes far outside the theatre boundaries (for example, on a visit to London) the Command should be turned over to the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, who must be in the Headquarters. If the Supreme Allied Commander is visiting any part of the theatre, or is just outside the boundaries he can retain command provided his communications are good enough.[2] The Deputy Supreme Allied Commander can then take the chair at meetings with the Commanders-in-Chief, and can signal any urgent proposed action to the Supreme Allied Commander for his approval; sufficient up-to-date information must therefore be available to him during his tours, to keep him in the picture. For this reason, a senior staff officer, usually the Deputy or Assistant Chief of Staff, with a small staff, should accompany the Supreme Allied Commander on his tours.

14. I submit that the Supreme Allied Commander should have under him three Allied Commanders-in-Chief; one for each service. It is essential that their respective Headquarters shall be as near as possible to his own and to each other, and at the point from which the overall theatre strategy can best be conducted.[3] In cases such as the campaign in Burma, and the one planned for Malaya, local commanders, coming immediately below each C.-in-C., should be appointed. Although main Naval Headquarters were in Colombo, direct teleprinter lines, scrambler telephones, despatch riders, a special train service, and frequent and regular exchanges of visits between Colombo and Kandy (70 miles apart) meant that the naval element in Kandy were in reasonably close touch with their own headquarters in Colombo. Ideally, of course, Naval Headquarters should have been closer to the other three; but there was not room for all of them in Colombo, and the expense of moving the Naval H.Q. some 70 miles would hardly have been justified.

15. The system by which the Allied Air C.-in-C. had an Allied Air Commander under him for all the Burma fronts with Headquarters in Barrackpore,

[1] See 'B', paragraphs 235-237.

[2] The wireless and cypher aircraft "Mercury" kept me in almost instant touch with my Headquarters, wherever I might be.

[3] For ZIPPER, which would be remote from bases and shore Headquarters, I had decided to embark with the three Commanders-in-Chief in an aircraft carrier. For DRACULA, the three Commanders-in-Chief were at Kandy, where, as I was suffering from amoebic dysentery, all meetings were held at my bedside.

whereas the C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A. did not have a corresponding military Commander at that level, may have made for economy in staffs; but I am now certain that it produced conditions conducive to friction and misunderstanding. For the theatre strategy was being devised by myself, with the three Commanders-in-Chief and their staffs, at Kandy, whilst the conduct of the Burma campaign was being implemented on the lower level at Barrackpore. Since it was physically impossible for C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A. to be in both places simultaneously, however, I consider that I should either have removed my headquarters and those of all three Commanders-in-Chief to Barrackpore—or else have had a separate Military Commander (with his own headquarters) there, subordinate to the C.-in-C., A.L.F.S.E.A. at Kandy, and at the level of Lieut.-General Stratemeyer and his Eastern Air Command Headquarters, I feel that all friction could have been avoided if I had taken either of these courses; though the latter course would have been expensive in staffs, and the former (*i.e.*, a general move to Barrackpore) would have created difficulties for the Naval C.-in-C., who felt very strongly that he could not leave Ceylon, where his whole shore organisation had already been built up.[1]

16. With the closing down of the Burma campaign and the prospect of campaigns in Malaya, Siam, French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies, I instructed C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A. to close down his Advanced Headquarters in Barrackpore, and to transfer his staff to the main Headquarters of A.L.F.S.E.A. at Kandy, Eastern Air Command was being disbanded and replaced, at the level corresponding to Twelfth Army, by an R.A.F. Command for Burma. This move, which took place at the end of July, marked the termination of C.-in-C. A.L.F.S.E.A.'s having to work on two levels; for he would now abandon the purely local Burma level (which corresponded to Eastern Air Command) and would confine himself to the overall theatre level (corresponding to Allied Air and Naval Commanders-in-Chief). In fact, the set-up at which I had always been aiming was finally achieved only just before the war ended: with my own Headquarters and those of all three Commanders-in-Chief together in Ceylon, team work was greatly facilitated and improved.

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### Relations with India Command[2]

The relationship between the South-East Asia and India Commands was discussed at the Quebec Conference in August, 1943, and was from time to time the subject of friendly conversations within the two Commands. The question was whether the pattern of the Mediterranean Command, where the Supreme Allied Commander who commanded the operational forces in Italy, also commanded his base organisation in the Middle East, should be followed; or that of the European Command, where the Supreme Allied Commander of course had no control over the War Office, Admiralty or Air Ministry—who stood to some extent in a similar relationship to him in his theatre as the Middle East Command did to the Mediterranean theatre, and India Command to the South-East Asia theatre. My own view, which was consistently adhered to by my senior American officers, is that the Mediterranean analogy was the nearer, since in both theatres we still had the War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry (and the corresponding departments in Washington) behind us, though of course in no way under the Supreme Allied Commander's control.

18. The supply and maintenance base and the schools and training areas for the South-East Asia Command were all situated in the territory of India Command. Although the whole of the Royal Air Force in India (including its base organisation and the R.A.F./R.I.A.F. training organisation) was under my command, through the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief, the military resources and potential of India (with that exception) came under Field-Marshal Auchinleck. He was in no sense subordinate to me, the two Commands being equal and parallel; but I wish to record the fact that he himself, his Headquarters, and, in fact, the whole of India Command, could hardly have done more for me if they had been under my orders—indeed, I doubt if they would have been called on to do as much, for I would have hesitated to order the great sacrifices which they frequently and freely made to ensure that S.E.A.C. did not go short.

19. The co-operation which came to exist between our two Commands was mainly due to excellent personal relations between Field-Marshal Auchinleck and myself; to our strong insistence that our staffs and Commands should also work together in harmony at every level; and to our having had, as our respective P.A.O.s, Lieut.-Generals Wheeler and

[1] In any case, if we had not been so low in the order of theatre priorities, we should throughout 1944 and 1945 have been carrying out amphibious operations followed by land-air operations remote from Northern Burma, and for which Ceylon was far more suitably placed.

[2] See 'A', paragraphs 23-26.

Lindsell, whose efficiency and mutual helpfulness greatly contributed to bringing about this happy state of affairs. For the future, however, I would recommend it as a sounder principle that within the same theatre boundaries the Base Commander should be subordinated to the Operational Commander, to the extent of being obliged to comply with his requests; for if the success of the relationship between the two Commanders, and between their respective Commands, is to be left entirely to goodwill, it would be optimistic to suppose that many will be as fortunate as I was.

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### ANOMALIES OF COMMAND

Although I had no authority for addressing the Combined Chiefs of Staff or U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff direct, I was allowed to repeat to the British Joint Staff Mission (J.S.M.) in Washington those of my telegrams to the British Chiefs of Staff which would require consideration in Washington.[1] As a result of the anomalous position occupied by General Stilwell, and his holding appointments in two neighbouring theatres and thus being bound to owe divided allegiance to the two theatre Commanders,[2] he was of course allowed to communicate direct with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, without necessarily having to inform me of his communications.

21. The exchanges of telegrams between London, Washington, and South-East Asia which led to the issue to me of a new directive on the 3rd June, 1944, are dealt with in detail in this Report[3] so as to illustrate some of the difficulties under which Field-Marshal Auchinleck, General Stilwell and myself were operating owing to lack of co-ordination between London and Washington and a consequent uncertainty regarding higher policy. It did not seem possible that an efficient Anglo-American plan could be worked out, until direction within and without the theatre had been more closely co-ordinated. The extent to which we had been working at cross-purposes can be judged from the fact that, until I repeated to them on the 13th May, 1944, signals sent by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in April, the British Chiefs of Staff had not been aware of these independent and parallel exchanges which had taken place between the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and the American Commanders. Moreover, I was informed that not all the exchanges between the British Chiefs of Staff and my Headquarters had been seen by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.

22. At this stage, the British Chiefs of Staff had telegraphed to Washington on the 25th May, that the difficulties could only be completely resolved by the early issue to me of a directive by the Combined Chiefs of Staff, followed by a second one from the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff to Lieut.-General Stilwell. General Stilwell did his utmost to discharge his duties as correctly as their conflicting interests allowed. But it is clear that any arrangement by which a Commander in one theatre simultaneously holds a high appointment in another, cannot fail to place him in an invidious position in which divided loyalty is almost inevitable. For the future, I would most strongly recommend a system of control by which there is only one channel along which recommendations and instructions regarding policy and strategy can pass—this channel to lie between the Supreme Allied Commander and his responsible superior authority—for only in this way can divisions of policy and strategy within the theatre be avoided.

23. Another form of anomaly lay in the fact that the Commanding General U.S.A.A.F., in Washington, retained control over the U.S. 20th Bomber Command[4] and the American Air Transport Command (although both had to fly their missions from and through South-East Asia territory); and that the Admiralty in London retained the right to issue separate and independent orders to the Naval Commander-in-Chief on questions of trade protection and action against the enemy fleet[5]. In neither case was there any obligation even to inform the Supreme Allied Commander of orders issued to forces operating within his theatre.

24. It is highly desirable that the boundaries of the three services and the Allies should coincide; or that, if circumstances arise which make this impracticable, the Supreme Alli d Commander's theatre boundaries should be drawn to include the areas of all his Commanders-in-Chief. For the future, I would urge that a simple and direct system of control be exercised by the Supreme Allied Commander, through the Allied Commanders-in-Chief of the three Services,

[1] See 'A', paragraph 28.

[2] See 'A', paragraphs 19-22. It has been pointed out to me by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, that General Stilwell's relations with his Government and with the Chinese and British Governments were entirely apart from the difficulties that arose during the campaign; and that in a combined command there are bound to be diverging opinions between Allies. The Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, has asked me to make it clear that General Stilwell was following directions from the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[3] See 'B', paragraphs 144-147 and 180-185.

[4] See 'B', paragraphs 293 and 612.

[5] See 'A', paragraphs 29 and 30.

over all the armed forces within his command; sea, land and air. Besides knowing what forces he commands, a Commander must have control over, and access to, formations which operate in his theatre of supreme responsibility. Modern ranges and speeds demand a combination of armed forces, operating freely throughout the three elements, under one co-ordinated command—particularly since the boundaries between the elements no longer define the boundaries between one operation and another.

25. I consider that no Supreme Allied Commander should be placed in a position where there are other supreme authorities who could (at any rate in theory) issue operational orders in his own theatre without consulting or informing him; but that all operational instructions from authorities in London or Washington should be passed through the Supreme Allied Commander. The subordinate commander concerned could receive these instructions simultaneously, in order to save time; but the Supreme Allied Commander would then be aware if a decision were made, at the highest level, to use the strategical bombers, for instance, or part of the fleet, in operations which might be at a tangent to his own strategy.

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### Breakdown of the Principle of Supreme Command

I had intended that the Commanders-in-Chief and Headquarters of the three services should move, with my own Headquarters, to Singapore, as soon as it was captured; since it would not be worth while to move to Rangoon as an interim measure. As soon as the war ended, I gave orders for this move to take place as soon as arrangements could be completed at Singapore for receiving the S.E.A.C. group of headquarters—which was estimated to be by November. On the 13th September, however, Admiral Power informed me that he had received a signal from the Admiralty laying down that, although it was realised that certain maintenance facilities for his aircraft and his major landing-craft would have to be moved to Singapore, the policy was that Ceylon should continue to be the main base for the East Indies Fleet, which was still in South-East Asia Command; and that the great Naval Base at Singapore should be used primarily for the support of the British Pacific Fleet, which would be operated from Hong Kong. This arrangement would effectively prevent either of the Naval Commanders-in-Chief from setting up his headquarters alongside those of the Commanders-in-Chief of the other services, and my own.

27. It seemed clear (and this in fact turned out to be the case) that the Americans would require little further assistance from the British Pacific Fleet; whereas I, on the other hand, would require all the help I could get from this fleet to carry out the greatly increased responsibilities of the enlarged South-East Asia Command. But the British Pacific Fleet (most of which had originally operated as part of the Eastern Fleet in S.E.A.C.) did not return to the Command; and although the boundaries of S.E.A.C. now extended into wide areas of the Pacific, this fleet's sphere of operations was restricted to China and Japan.

28. It had been decided by the Chiefs of Staff that the British Pacific Fleet would be kept outside my Command: and that although I was made administratively responsible for Hong Kong—which would mean finding military and air forces for its reoccupation, keeping it supplied with food and stores, and being generally responsible for supporting its administration—the colony was specifically excluded from my operational control. I was consequently in the peculiar position of relying on one base (India), and being responsible for the administrative support of another—though a very small one—neither of which was in my Command. This did not make for easy working. But the excellent relations established with H.E. the Commander-in-Chief of Hong Kong[1] and his staff, and visits by myself, my Land and Air Commanders-in-Chief, and our staffs, enabled all administrative matters to be handled smoothly.

29. Owing to the unexpected division of the fleets, their Headquarters, and their responsibilities, the two Naval Commanders-in-Chief were now at more than a thousand miles in opposite directions from the Commanders-in-Chief of the other services and from myself. But liaison arrangements with the British Pacific Fleet and the Command arrangements of the East Indies Fleet worked remarkably well, and the personal relations which existed between Admiral Fraser, Admiral Power and myself, and our staffs, surmounted the difficulties of the official relationships. Admiral Fraser, although he owed me no allegiance, could not have been more helpful in meeting every request for assistance that I put up to him. But the fact remains that we ended up in South-East Asia as we had begun: with the Supreme

[1] Rear-Admiral (later Vice-Admiral Sir Cecil) Harcourt; whose full appointment was "Commander-in-Chief and Head of Military Administration, Hong Kong."

Allied Commander unable to have the Headquarters of his three Commanders-in-Chief alongside his own—which I submit is a prerequisite to effectively operating through his three service Commanders-in-Chief. Moreover, to my great regret, the conception of unity of command and close association between the Commanders-in-Chief of the land forces, air forces, and fleets, and the Supreme Commander was abandoned after the war came to an end.

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### RECOMMENDATION

I had hoped that, when a permanent organisation for peace-time was under discussion, the boundaries of the Commands of all three Commanders-in-Chief might be drawn to coincide; and that a Supreme Commander, with a small skeleton staff, would be left at Singapore—which I considered should also be the Headquarters of the three Commanders-in-Chief—to co-ordinate high level strategical planning, and to conduct inter-service exercises.

31. I had also been exercised in my mind with the question of a successor who would inherit the many civilian responsibilities which in war-time form part of the co-ordinating, administrative, and Civil Affairs aspect of the Supreme Commander's tasks[1]. On my visits to London I had discussed this aspect at the Colonial Office and at the Foreign Office; and I had suggested that soon after the war either a Governor-General, or perhaps a Special Commissioner, should be appointed for the whole area of South-East Asia; but I admit that I had not thought out clearly, or in detail, what his functions would be.

32. In due course, the Colonial Office appointed a Governor-General with co-ordinating functions over the Malayan Union, Singapore, North Borneo, Sarawak and Brunei. (I had hoped that Hong Kong would be included; but here his responsibility was limited to representing its defence interests on the South-East Asia Defence Committee.) At the same time, the Foreign Office appointed a Special Commissioner, responsible for liaison with the foreign governments in the theatre, as well as for the co-ordination of the supply and movement of food and shipping.[2] Orders were also received for the setting up of a Defence Committee in South-East Asia, consisting of the Governor-General, the Special Commissioner and the Supreme Commander.

33. Towards the end of my time in Singapore, I discussed with the Governor-General[3] and the Special Commissioner,[4] as well as with the two available Commanders-in-Chief, what organisation in peace-time would be most easily convertible to a war organisation if this became necessary. There was general and firm agreement among us that a British Supreme Commander would be required at Singapore, when the Supreme Allied Commander's functions lapsed.[5] We visualised that the Special Commissioner would hold regular meetings with the accredited representatives of His Majesty's Government in French Indo-China, the Netherlands East Indies, Siam and China; and that the Governor-General would take the chair at meetings held with the Governors of territories under his responsibility—these meetings being in both cases attended by representatives of the neighbouring Dominion Governments.

34. Meetings would also, we foresaw, be held between the Governor-General, the Special Commissioner, and myself—on the one hand—and the Commanders-in-Chief: at which every aspect, military, political and economic, would be covered. We were convinced of the need for a Supreme Command in war;[6] and we considered that, since the duties of a Supreme Commander are difficult and complex, continuity of knowledge and experience should be maintained in peace, if the system was to function efficiently on the outbreak of war, and an adequate Supreme Headquarters was speedily to be rebuilt when a war seemed imminent. Moreover, it seemed to us that, if a Supreme Commander with a skeleton headquarters were not retained, his appointment might either be delayed too long for him to gain full control by the time war broke out—or else, if he were appointed in good time, this might, in a period of strained relations, be regarded as a hostile gesture if it were known that he was only to be appointed in order to wage war.

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[1] Which cover political relations with foreign countries in the Command; Psychological Warfare; public and service relations; allocation of radio frequencies; etc.

[2] Although there proved to be ample work for both these high officials in dealing with the immediate problems created by the war, I remain of the opinion that ultimately only one is required so far as overall defence requirements are concerned in this area.

[3] The Right Honourable Malcolm Macdonald who arrived at Singapore on the 21st May, 1946.

[4] Lord Killearn, who arrived at Singapore on the 16th March, 1946.

[5] Although Mr. Macdonald and Lord Killearn were jointly to constitute the South-East Asia Defence Committee they both made it clear that they wished the S.A.C.S.E.A. organisation to continue; and they themselves attended the Supreme Allied Commander's meetings.

[6] Especially since it seems unlikely that we should fight without Allies.

35. If there were a Supreme Commander in peace time, staff departments could be retained in cadre, to deal with combined and airborne operations, inter-service and inter-theatre communications (under the Signal Officer-in-Chief), inter-service and high level Intelligence (under the Director of Intelligence), Medical Services, Psychological Warfare, Public Relations and Information, etc. This small Headquarters would be able to co-ordinate strategic planning and combined exercises; for which (and for any other inter-service purpose) the Supreme Headquarters would provide a Chairman for a committee drawn from the staff of the three Commanders-in-Chief. It is in my opinion doubtful whether a group of sailors, soldiers and airmen, trained exclusively in the methods of their respective services, can plan a combined operation or undertake combined training with success, unless inter-service co-operation is directed by an inter-service Commander, advised by a Joint Planning Staff and by a Combined Operations Staff, so that the efforts of his three subordinate and co-equal service Commanders-in-Chief shall be most efficiently co-ordinated.

36. In view of the conclusions which had been reached at our discussions at Singapore, I had recommended to the Chiefs of Staff that a British Supreme Commander should be appointed to succeed me; that he should have a personal staff of nineteen officers, and that he should have a Director of Intelligence with a staff of twenty-one. On the 1st April, 1946, the day that the Malayan Union and Singapore reverted to Civil Government, the Chiefs of Staff informed me that they proposed to establish a South-East Asia Zone—comprising Malaya, Borneo, Hong Kong, the South China Sea, the Malacca Strait; and the adjoining centres of strategic interest, Siam, French Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies. The services within this zone would be commanded by the Naval Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Station, with his Headquarters at Hong Kong, and by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Land Forces, South-East Asia, and the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Far East, with both their Headquarters at Singapore, representing the three services; as well as a Defence Committee consisting of the Governor-General, the Special Commissioner and the Service High Command, under the Chairmanship of the Governor-General.

37. In the meantime, the Chiefs of Staff provisionally accepted my proposals for a Supreme Allied Headquarters, with a reduced establishment, subject to a detailed examination of the proposed inter-service Intelligence Staff. The South-East Asia Defence Committee recommended subsequently that this Staff should be retained, and that it should revert to the Commanders-in-Chief's Committee if and when the Supreme Commanders' Headquarters was disbanded. The Prime Minister invited me to come to London to attend the Victory Parade on the 8th June, 1946; and the Chiefs of Staff instructed me to hand over acting command of S.E.A.C. to Lieut.-General Stopford. On my return to London, I attended a meeting of the British Chiefs of Staff, before whom I placed as forcibly as possible the views which I have summarised here. They agreed to extend the Acting Supreme Allied Commander's appointment and functions at Singapore until the 30th November, 1946; and on that day the system of Supreme Command in South-East Asia was abolished.

38. It took me some time to familiarise myself with the duties of Supreme Commander; and I feel that the best way in which to fit oneself for a war appointment of this nature would be to learn its intricacies in peace-time—which can presumably best be done by filling the post itself. But in peace-time a Supreme Commander would normally be selected from among older and more senior officers, and might have exceeded the age limit by the time there was a war. This difficulty could be overcome by the appointment of a younger man as the Supreme Commander's Chief of Staff—for this would afford an admirable opportunity of preparing a suitable candidate, in peace-time, for a specialised (and I submit, necessary) appointment in time of War.

Mountbatten of Burma

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
*New Delhi*, 30*th June*, 1947.

# APPENDICES

# AND

# ANNEXURES

# APPENDIX A

## Extracts from the Final Report of Quadrant 24th August 1943

*Extracts from the Final Report of the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Quadrant Conference (held at Quebec), which relate to South-East Asia Command. (Paragraphs 20—22, 24—26, 37—45, 67 and 68.)*

### The War Against Japan

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#### Long-term Strategy

20. We have made a preliminary study of long-term strategy for the defeat of Japan and are of the opinion that the following factors require particular emphasis:

(*a*) The dependence of Japan upon air power, naval power, and shipping for maintaining her position in the Pacific and South-East Asia.

(*b*) The consequent need for applying the maximum attrition to Japan's air force, naval forces, and shipping by all possible means in all possible areas.

(*c*) The advantage to be gained and the time to be saved by a more extensive use of the superior air resources at the disposal of the United Nations, both in the strategic field and in conjunction with operations on land.

21. We consider that great advantage may be obtained, by modern and untried methods, from the vast resources which, with the defeat of Germany, will become available to the United Nations. We have in mind:

(*a*) A project rapidly to expand and extend the striking power of the United Nations air forces in China as well as of the ground troops for their defence by employing the large numbers of load-carrying aircraft available to open an "air road" to China.

(*b*) The employment of lightly-equipped jungle forces, dependent largely upon air supply lines.

(*c*) The use of special equipment, such as artificial harbours, HABBAKUKS,[1] etc., to enable the superior power of the United Nations to be deployed in unexpected and undeveloped areas.

22. From every point of view operations should be framed to force the defeat of Japan as soon as possible after the defeat of Germany. Planning should be on the basis of accomplishing this within twelve months of that event. Decisions as to specific operations which will insure a rapid course of events must await further examination on the lines indicated above.

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24. We are agreed that the reorientation of forces from the European theatre to the Pacific and Far East should be started as soon as the German situation, in our opinion, so allows.

25. The principle has been accepted that the forces to carry out operations from the East, including the South-West Pacific, shall be provided by the United States, and for operations from the West by Great Britain, except for special types not available to Great Britain which will be provided by the United States. The employment of Dominion forces will be a matter of discussion between all Governments concerned.

#### Specific Operations, 1943-44

26. We have found it impracticable during QUADRANT to arrive at all the necessary decisions for operations in the war against Japan in 1943-44. We therefore propose that, as soon as the necessary further examinations have been made, a Combined Chiefs of Staff Conference should be held wherever may be most convenient, unless agreement is reached through the ordinary channels. There are, nevertheless, certain decisions which we feel able to make at once.

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#### Operations in India-Burma-China Theatre, 1943-44

37. To carry out operations for the capture of Upper Burma in order to improve the air route and

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[1] HABBAKUKS were floating self-propelled airfields, displacing a million tons, formed of PYKRETE (water with 5 per cent. wood pulp mixed in it and then frozen into a substance far stronger and less liable to melt than ice). The hull, shaped like a huge ship, would be kept frozen by comparatively small refrigerator plants. They would be virtually unsinkable by bombing, torpedo and gun-fire, and any damage to runways could be quickly repaired by freezing additional PYKRETE after pouring it into bomb craters. Both HABBAKUKS and MULBERRIES (artificial harbours) were sponsored by Combined Operations Headquarters, London.

establish overland communications with China. Target date mid-February, 1944.

It is recognised that the extent of these operations is dependent upon logistic considerations as affected by recent floods.

38. To continue preparations for an amphibious operation in the Spring of 1944. Pending a decision on the particular operation, the scale of these preparations should be of the order of those contemplated at TRIDENT for the capture of Akyab and Ramree.

39. To continue the perparation of India as a base for the operations eventually contemplated in the South-East Asia Command.

40. To continue to build up and increase the air routes and air supplies of China, and the development of air facilities, with a view to:

(*a*) Keeping China in the war.

(*b*) Intensifying operations against the Japanese.

(*c*) Maintaining increased U.S. and Chinese Air Forces in China.

(*d*) Equipping Chinese ground forces.

41. We have decided that our main effort should be put into offensive operations with the object of establishing land communications with China and improving and securing the air route. Priorities cannot be rigid and we therefore propose to instruct the Supreme Commander in formulating his proposals to regard this decision as a guide and to bear in mind the importance of the longer-term development of the lines of communication.

EXAMINATION OF FUTURE OPERATIONS

42. We have directed that the following studies shall be made forthwith:

43. A study and report on the following operations and their relation one to another:—

(*a*) An operation against Northern Sumatra; target date Spring, 1944.

(*b*) Operations southwards from Northern Burma; target date November, 1944.

(*c*) Operations through the Moulmein area or Kra Isthmus in the direction of Bangkok; target date to be as early as practicable.

(*d*) Operations through the Malacca Straits and Malaya for the direct capture of Singapore; target date to be as early as practicable.

(*e*) The capture of Akyab and Ramree to determine whether it is necessary to the success of operations in (*a*) to (*d*) above or to the operations in Upper Burma (paragraph 37).

44. A study of the potentialities and limitations of developing the air route to China on a scale sufficient to employ all the heavy bomber and transport aircraft likely to be available for the South-East Asia theatre and China in 1944-45, on the assumption that Germany is defeated in the Autumn of 1944.

45. This study to specify the action required to implement the best possible plan resulting from the above without prejudice to the operations in paragraphs 37 and 38.

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*Paragraphs* 46 *to* 60 *have not been reprinted here as their sense is set out in greater detail in Appendix B.*

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PIPELINE, INDIA-CHINA

67. We have approved, subject to prior requirements for military operations in Burma, the construction of a 4-inch pipeline from Assam to Kunming and of a 6-inch pipeline from Calcutta to Assam. These will facilitate air operations in China and ease congestion on the existing lines of supply.

SUPPLY ROUTES IN N.-E. INDIA

68. We have approved, subject to prior requirements of operations in Burma, intensified development of the supply routes into and in Assam and have issued directives to theatre commanders concerned with a view to a target of 220,000 tons per month being reached by 31st December, 1945.

# APPENDIX B

## Memorandum from the Prime Minister 22nd September 1943

### The Reorganisation of Command in India and South-East Asia

*Memorandum by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence*

1. The vigorous and effective prosecution of large-scale operations against Japan in South-East Asia and the rapid development of the air route through Burma to China necessitate the reorganisation of the High Command in the Indian theatre.

2. The functions of Supreme Operational Command, combined with those of War Member of the Government of India and Commander-in-Chief, India, responsible for all military administration, training and internal security, are more than one man can discharge. It has therefore been decided that the statutory command in India shall be divided from the Operational Command in South-East Asia as described below.

#### Command in India

3. The administration of India as a base for the forces in South-East Asia will remain under the control of a statutory Commander-in-Chief, India, responsible to the Government of India and the Viceroy. Co-ordination of movement and maintenance, both of the operational forces based on India and of the internal garrison, can best be carried out efficiently by one staff responsible in the last resort to one authority with power to decide priorities. This machinery exists to-day in the Government of India and in G.H.Q., India. It is the only machinery which can carry out the dual tasks of meeting the internal requirements of India as well as the requirements of operations in the South-East Asia theatre (see paragraph 7 below).

#### Command in South-East Asia

4. From a study of the Command systems in other theatres, particularly those where Allied as well as British forces are operating, the conclusion has been reached that the appointment of a Supreme Allied Commander, responsible for the conduct of operations against Japan in South-East Asia and for the development of the air route to China, is the best arrangement. Subordinate to the Supreme Allied Commander will be a Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and a Naval Commander-in-Chief, an Army Commander-in-Chief and an Air Commander-in-Chief.

5. General Stilwell will be Deputy Supreme Allied Commander of the South-East Asia theatre, and in that capacity will command the Chinese troops operating into Burma and all United States air and ground forces committed to the South-East Asia theatre.

(*a*) The operational control of the Chinese forces operating into Burma will be exercised, in conformity with the overall plan of the British Army Commander-in-Chief, by the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander or by his representative who will be located with the troops.

(*b*) The operational control of the 10th Air Force will be vested in the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and exercised by his air representative located at the headquarters of the Air Commander-in-Chief.

(*c*) General Stilwell will continue to have the same direct responsibility to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek as heretofore. His dual function under the Supreme Allied Commander and under the Generalissimo is recognised.

(*d*) The organisation and command of the United States Army and Navy Air Transport Services in the South-East Asia area will remain under the direct control of the Commanding-General, United States Army Air Forces, and of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, respectively, subject to such supply and service functions as may be by them delegated to the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander. Requests by the Supreme Allied Commander for the use of United States troop-carrier aircraft for operational purposes will be transmitted to the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander.

(*e*) Requests for the use of surface transportation capacity in and through India, or for development involving construction for the air route to China, will be passed through the Supreme Allied Commander in order that they may be related, as regards priority, to his requirements before being placed on the Commander-in-Chief, India.

6. The Naval Commander-in-Chief will be subordinate to the Supreme Allied Commander in all matters connected with the security and support of the

land campaigns and amphibious operations in South-East Asia. But in all matters connected with the security of sea communications in the Indian Ocean, both outside and inside the area of the South-East Asia Command and with offensive action against the enemy's naval forces, he will be responsible to the British Admiralty direct.

7. The Commands in India and in South-East Asia will therefore be re-organised as follows:—

A.—The Commander-in-Chief, India, will be responsible for—

(i) The defence (including the local defence of coasts and harbours) and the internal security of India, with the proviso that the Government of India may authorise the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, to exercise the functions and responsibilities of Commander-in-Chief in certain areas.[1] The Commander-in-Chief, India, will also continue to exercise his present responsibilities in respect of the East Persia supply route.

(ii) In addition to his responsibilities for such forces as are under his Command for the purposes set out in A (i) above, he will be responsible, in conformity with the operational requirements of the Supreme Allied Commander—

(*a*) for discipline, administration, movement and training of the land forces and forces of the Royal Indian Navy which are in India but which have been assigned to the Supreme Allied Commander; and

(*b*) for the provision and control of such administrative services for all air forces based on India and placed under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander (including their supporting training and maintenance establishments) as after consultation between the Commander-in-Chief, India, and the Supreme Allied Commander they consider can most conveniently be carried out by the Commander-in-Chief, India.

The Supreme Commander will give to the Commander-in-Chief, India, such assistance in technical maintenance and training for air forces assigned for the defence of India as the Commander-in-Chief, India, may require.

(iii) Control of the agencies in India necessary for the provision of personnel and material, assembly, despatch and maintenance (except in respect of the air forces which are governed by paragraph 7A (ii) (*b*) above) of the forces based on India, and for the issue of executive orders in this connection, in accordance with the requirements of the Supreme Allied Commander, and for placing the necessary demands on the United Kingdom, United States, India or the Chief Procurement Officer (C.P.O.), Eastern Group Supply Council, for these forces, except for direct demands, which may be made by the Navy or Air Force Commanders-in-Chief on Admiralty or Air Ministry sources of supply.

B.—The Supreme Allied Command in South-East Asia will be set up as follows:—

(i) The Command and Staff will be a combined British and American one on the lines of the North African Command.

(ii) The Supreme Allied Commander to be British, with an American deputy. He will have under him Naval, Army and Air Commanders-in-Chief, and also a Principal Administrative Officer to co-ordinate the administrative planning of all three services and of the Allied forces. He will also have a British economic and financial adviser.

(iii) The Deputy Supreme Allied Commander as laid down in paragraph 5 above and the Commanders-in-Chief of the three services, mentioned above, acting under orders of the Supreme Commander, to control all operations and have under their Command—

(*a*) Within the areas of the South-East Asia Command and India Command, all R.N. forces and all forces of the R.I.N. which may be allotted by the Commander-in-Chief, India, to the Supreme Commander for operational purposes;

(*b*) All land forces which may be within the boundaries of the South-East Asia Command;

(*c*) All R.A.F. units and establishments which may be within the boundaries of the South-East Asia Command and India Command, including their administration, except as provided in sub-paragraph 7A (ii) (*b*) above; and any I.A.F. within the same boundaries which may be allotted by the Commander-in-Chief, India, to the Supreme Allied Commander for operational purposes.

8. The South-East Asia Command will be identical with the area at present allocated to the India

[1] This authorisation was in fact given in respect of Assam and that part of Bengal which lies to the east of the River Meghna.

Command, excepting India itself and territory westward up to the present boundary with the Persia-Iraq Command. The boundaries of the South-East Asia Command will be as follows[1]:—

(*a*) *Eastern Boundary.*[2]—From the point where the frontier between China and Indo-China reaches the Gulf of Tonking, southwards along the coast of Indo-China, Thailand (Siam) and Malaya to Singapore; from Singapore south to the north coast of Sumatra; thence round the east coast of Sumatra (leaving the Sunda Strait to the eastward of the line) to a point on the coast of Sumatra at longitude 104 degrees East; thence south to latitude 08 degrees South; thence south-easterly towards Onslow, Australia, and, on reaching longitude 110 degrees East, due south along that meridian.

(*b*) *Northern Boundary.*—From the point where the frontier between China and Indo-China reaches the Gulf of Tonking westwards along the Chinese frontier to its junction with the Indo-Burma border; thence along that border to the sea, thence round the coast of India and Persia (all exclusive to the South-East Asia Command) to meridian 60 degrees East.

(*c*) *Western Boundary.*—Southward along meridian 60 degrees East[3] to Albatross Island, thence south-eastward to exclude Rodriguez Island[4] and thence due southward.

9. All operations in Burma, including the control of Chinese forces operating in that country, and in the rest of the area defined, will be under South-East Asia Command. Within India itself the Supreme Allied Commander will exercise operational direction and control over all forces assigned to him for the purpose of the operations against Japan. It will be mutually agreed between him and the Commander-in-Chief, India, at what stage the latter will surrender command over the forces required and cease to have responsibility laid down in paragraph 7A (ii) (*a*).

10. The Headquarters of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, should be formed in the first instance at Delhi, since it will take over elements of the present General Headquarters, India. The Supreme Allied Commander will submit his recommendations as to the ultimate location of his Headquarters as soon as he has had time to study the problem.

### Division of Responsibility in India and South-East Asia and Command Relationships

11. Conflicts of opinion over priorities in connection with Administration must be anticipated. It will therefore be necessary for someone on the spot to resolve these differences day by day as they occur. This authority will be the Viceroy, not in his statutory capacity as Governor-General, but acting on behalf of the War Cabinet. For this purpose, it will be necessary that he should have at his disposal a suitable organisation independent of the Departments of the Government of India.

12. The Supreme Commander will in any event have direct access to the British Chiefs of Staff on all matters and, if he is not satisfied with the ruling of the Viceroy on administrative matters, he will be able to exercise this right. The Commander-in-Chief, India, will continue to have the right of direct access to the Chiefs of Staff on certain matters arising from his responsibilities as defined in paragraph 7A above.

13. The Combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise a general jurisdiction over strategy for the South-East Asia theatre, and the allocation of American and British resources of all kinds between the China theatre and the South-East Asia Command. The British Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to operations, and will be the channel through which all instructions to the Supreme Commander are passed.

### The Co-ordination of American Agencies such as O.S.S., O.W.I., F.C.B[5]., etc., with comparable British Organisations

14. In order to facilitate the free exchange of information and co-ordination between the United States and British *quasi*-military agencies in India and the South-East Asia Command, a Combined Liaison Committee will be set up at New Delhi.

There will be full and open discussion in the Combined Liaison Committee before any *quasi*-military activities involving operations in India or the South-East Asia theatre are undertaken. However, before plans for such operations in these areas are put into effect by United States agencies, the concurrence of the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, India, or the Supreme Commander, South-East Asia theatre, must be obtained as applicable.

[1] See 'A', paragraphs 1, 16 and 17; and Map 1 (before page 1).

[2] Previously the dividing line between the Indian theatre and the Pacific theatre.

[3] Previously the boundary between India Command and Persia-Iraq Command.

[4] This was transferred to Command of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, East Africa, on the 1st September, 1942.

[5] O.S.S.=Office of Strategic Services; O.W.I.=Office of War Information (See Annexure 7, paragraph 14—page 225): F.C.B.=Federal Communications Board.

# APPENDIX C

## DIRECTIVE BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO S.A.C.S.E.A. 23RD OCTOBER 1943

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TELEGRAM FROM LONDON TO DELHI

MOUNTBATTEN FROM CHIEFS OF STAFF, 23RD OCTOBER, 1943

Following is directive to Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia Command, by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, dated at 10, Downing Street, 23rd October, 1943.

1. The decisions made at the QUADRANT Conference by the Combined Chiefs of Staff and which were approved by me, representing the War Cabinet, and by the President of the United States of America, are drawn to your attention. In accordance with, and acting in harmony with, these decisions, you are to assume your appointment as Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, as provided for in my memorandum, and you are to direct all operations against the Japanese within the boundaries of your command as laid down therein. As provided by paragraph thirteen of my memorandum and by paragraph 58[1] of the decisions of the QUADRANT Conference, you will be responsible to the British Chiefs of Staff whom the Combined Chiefs of Staff have authorised to exercise jurisdiction over all operational matters in your Command and to issue all directives to you.

2. Your first duty is to engage the enemy as closely and continuously as is possible so that his forces, and particularly his air forces, may be worn down and consumed by attrition and to establish our superiority to the extent of forcing a diversion of his forces from the Pacific theatre. Secondly, but of no less importance, you are to maintain and enlarge our contacts with China, both by the air route, and by making direct contact in Northern Burma by the use, amongst other methods, of the strongest possible ground forces specially organised and supplied from the air.

3. The sea and air power, which you will have at your disposal, are to be utilised by you to the fullest advantage, by the seizure of a point or points, which will not only bring about a powerful Japanese reaction but which will also provide you with the choice of several possible counter-strokes to this reaction. In your formulation of plans for amphibious operations in 1944, therefore, you will decide on the point which when attacked appears to you best calculated to provide the above requirements, and you will carry out whatever operation is approved. Further for the second phase of your operations in 1944 you will draw up your plans in the light of the reaction which has been induced in the enemy.

4. H.M. Government will make available to you, at least four weeks prior to the first major amphibious operation, a battle-fleet of sufficient strength to engage any force which the Government considers the Japanese might be in a position to disengage from the Pacific theatre. The base of this battle-fleet will be Ceylon. With this object in view as many armoured fleet carriers as can be made available together with not less than ten escort carriers will be attached to the Eastern Fleet.

5. In order to undertake whatever amphibious operation is ultimately selected, as these vessels and other resources reach you, you will start forming a combined striking force. The components of this force, or circus, will be:

(i) a squadron operating inshore to provide coastal bombardment,

(ii) the carriers to give air support,

(iii) such transports as are necessary,

(iv) various types of assault and landing ships.

With C.-in-C. India, you will co-ordinate the organisation and training of the special forces required to land from the sea in the face of the enemy and to establish a position such that the landing of reinforcements not specially trained in amphibious landings can be carried out in safety and without interruption. You will report what you need to construct artificial harbours, floating runways, and airfields, balancing your requirements against the practicability of providing them in the time available.

6. The importance of speed is obvious and you will inform us of your proposed operations and their dates and specify your requirements as soon as possible.

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[1] Paragraph 13 of Appendix B is word for word the same as the omitted paragraph 58 of Appendix A.

# APPENDIX D

## Agreement with the Generalissimo. 8th November 1943

Telegram from London to Delhi

Mountbatten from Chiefs of Staff, 8th November, 1943

Please signal your views on following from Dill.[1]

*Begins*. At recent conference at Chungking, boundaries of S.E.A.C. were discussed by Mountbatten and the Generalissimo, with Somervell[2] present; after the meeting, latter made a summary of the Generalissimo's proposals and got him to agree to it. Somervell had intended to return via London and submit his notes to Chiefs of Staff and Prime Minister but eventually had to proceed to Washington direct. He has since submitted them to the U.S. Chiefs of Staff and to the President who have approved them.

2. Herewith text of notes made by Somervell. *Quote*. Unity of Command under Mountbatten for Burma Campaign has wholehearted approval of the Generalissimo. He considers that inclusion of Indo-China and Siam in S.E.A. theatre under present conditions would not only be impracticable but also an actual deterrent to successful prosecution of any operations designed to defeat the Japanese, because of the effect which he believes such a change of boundary would have on the Chinese people, the Chinese Army, the Siamese people and those of Indo-China, and also on the Japanese. The people of China and the Chinese troops know that the countries in question belong to the China theatre of war and the ill effect on their morale if this change were now to be made, would affect the outlook of the people and troops towards the war and the conduct of the operations we have in view.

The above belief is strengthened by the repercussions of the British Press announcement to the effect that a change of the kind was being considered; this necessitated the Chinese News Agency issuing a denial. Enemy propaganda has aimed at convincing the Siamese and Indo-Chinese of the British intention to hold their territories after the end of the war. If the theatre boundaries were now altered, people might well become convinced that the Japanese were right and they would become hostile to our cause; furthermore the present happy relations between Britain, the United States and China would become more susceptible to a possible breach as a result of propaganda by the Japanese in China. All China plus Siam and Indo-China constitute the China theatre.

The scope of operations of the Supreme Allied Commander of the new S.E.A. theatre may involve Siam and Indo-China as well as Malaya and Burma, as the campaign develops. The Generalissimo considers that the following arrangements should be agreed in advance, to permit satisfactory and close co-operation between the two theatres:—

(*a*) When the time shall come for the launching of assaults from both theatres on the Japanese in Siam and in Indo-China, the forces under Mountbatten's command are expected to attack from the south, using to the full the facilities provided by the air bases and ports under S.E.A.C.'s control; the attack from the north will be carried out by the Chinese forces. The boundaries between the theatres in Siam and Indo-China, after troops have been landed there, will be agreed at the time on the basis of the respective progress made in the advances of the two forces.

(*b*) A Chinese-British-American Committee will be set up at H.Q. Supreme Commander, China theatre, to deal with all questions of a political nature which may arise during the operations.

*Unquote*

3. On the political side the above notes merely record the proposals made by the Generalissimo (and to which the President has agreed); on the military side, Somervell says Mountbatten considers the suggested arrangement entirely satisfactory and he tells me that the proposals were in fact partly fathered by Mountbatten.

4. Somervell suggests that in this matter he should be the channel for passing on to the Generalissimo the British and American attitude both in view of his part in the discussion and in view of the Generalissimo's charge to him to represent the views expressed

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[1] Field-Marshal Sir John Dill was Head of the British Joint Staff Mission in Washington.

[2] Lieut.-General Brehon B. Somervell (Commanding General of the U.S. Services of Supply) was sent by President Roosevelt as a Special Envoy to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to announce the formation of the South-East Asia Command.

above; he has therefore sent me these notes with a view to the appropriate authorities in London giving their approval of them. He hopes to be able to tell the Generalissimo that the British and Americans have approved his note and that formal acceptance of the proposed changes will be sent to him in due course.

5. I have been asked for an answer at the earliest possible moment, in view of probable departures on morning of 9th November.

*Ends.*

☼ ☼

### Telegram from Delhi to London

Chiefs of Staff from Mountbatten, 9th November, 1943

Your telegram of 8th November forwarding telegram from Dill.

When the Generalissimo, Somervell and myself had our last interview, I put forward the solution listed below in order to overcome the objections which the Generalissimo had raised to the inclusion in the S.E.A. theatre of Siam and Indo-China.

(i) In order to avoid the disadvantages which the Generalissimo claimed would follow the announcement of any changes, that no such announcement would be made. When he prophesied the effect the boundary changes would have on the peoples in question, I did not contradict him since it suited me quite well for the change to be kept secret as this would prevent any increase of enemy apprehension of amphibious operations to be carried out against the Kra Isthmus, and furthermore I wanted the atmosphere to remain friendly. I doubt the wisdom however of permitting the Generalissimo to think that his arguments are accepted unequivocally by the British or Americans.

(ii) That to operate freely in Siam and Indo-China would be my full and independent right and also that conquered areas would be incorporated as part of the S.E.A. theatre automatically.

(iii) I claimed the right of procuring my own Intelligence and of effecting pre-operational activities in territories directly or indirectly concerned with the operations I projected.

(iv) That the Generalissimo and myself would arrange the co-ordination of attacks from the two theatres by mutual discussion. A parallel case had been that of Alexander and Eisenhower before the Mediterranean Command was unified.

(v) That if the Chinese and S.E.A.C. forces approached each other and there was a probability of their joining up, then and only then would the theatre boundaries question be raised.

2. The Generalissimo stated that he would need time to consider these proposals and he asked Somervell to remain at Chungking so that he could have a discussion on them with him the next day. When Somervell on his return showed me his notes, I pointed out to him that they differed in certain respects from my original proposals; I told him however that I felt the suggestions were acceptable as far as the military side went but that investigation into the political side would be necessary, especially as regards the completely new proposal in his final paragraph.

3. Please note telegram of 2nd November to Foreign Office in which my Political Advisers drew attention to the disadvantages, political and para-military, which acceptance of the final paragraph would entail.

4. May I suggest that this whole question should be deferred for consideration at the next Combined Chiefs of Staff Conference since the issue is at present remote and the need to avoid engaging upon restricting agreements now is vital.

☼ ☼

### Telegram from Delhi to Cairo

Wedemeyer from Mountbatten, 30th November, 1943

I believe I have now successfully cleared outstanding points after a visit to Generalissimo and Madame at Ramgarh.

I pointed out to him that the Prime Minister could not agree to the Political Commission in Chungking dealing with political questions in Siam and Indo-China. The Generalissimo understood this and was not perturbed.

The Generalissimo confirmed that he had no objection to my sending Intelligence officers in future to Indo-China and Siam, but requested general information of my plans. I replied to the effect that I would do the same as he did.

# APPENDIX E

## Directive on Integration of British and United States Air Forces 11th December 1943

*Directive from Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, S.E.A.C., to Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, Air Commander-in-Chief, S.E.A.C.; Lieut.-General J. W. Stilwell, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander; and Major-General G. E. Stratemeyer, Commanding General, U.S.A.A.F., India-Burma Sector dated 11th December 1943*

S.E.A.C. Directive No. 5

Pursuant to agreements reached in conference and discussions at Sextant with the Commanding General, U.S. Army Air Forces (General H. H. Arnold), the U.S. Chief of Staff (General George C. Marshall), and the British Chief of Air Staff (Sir Charles Portal), I am publishing the following:

1. In order to ensure the effective operational direction of the R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F. in this theatre, I have decided to integrate certain elements of the 10th U.S. Air Force and of the R.A.F., based upon the following premises:—

(*a*) The 10th U.S. Air Force and the R.A.F. are hereby placed under the unified command of the Air Commander-in-Chief.

(*b*) The combined air forces so integrated will form a subordinate air command to be known as the Eastern Air Command, consisting initially of the R.A.F. Bengal Command, and the 10th U.S. Air Force. The Commanding General U.S.A.A.F., I.-B. Sector, C.B.I. Theatre, is designated to command the Eastern Air Command.

2. The command of the 14th U.S. Air Force will remain under the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander.

3. Within the Eastern Air Command there will be included:—

(*a*) A Tactical Air Force under the operational control of the present Air Officer Commanding, Bengal Command.

(*b*) A Strategical Air Force under the operational control of the Commanding General, 10th U.S. Air Force.

(*c*) Such other grouping as the Air Commander, Eastern Air Command, desires to make.

4. In exercising operational control of these integrated forces, the respective commanders will observe the following principles:—

(*a*) The integrity of U.S.A.A.F. Groups and R.A.F. Wings will be retained.

(*b*) Administrative control and responsibilities for supply will remain under the respective U.S. and R.A.F. Commanders.

5. The Air Commander-in-Chief in exercising his operational control, is specifically given the responsibility for the defence of all U.S. Air Transport Command facilities in the I.-B. Sector of S.E.A.C.

6. Co-ordination of planning and the operations between the Commanding General, Eastern Air Command, and the 14th U.S. Air Force will be arranged through the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and the Air Commander-in-Chief.

# APPENDIX F

## Policy Towards the Burmans
## 2nd June 1945

Directive by the Supreme Allied Commander

1. The outlines of a liberal policy towards the people of Burma generally, during the re-occupation, have been laid down in Lord Wavell's India Command Directive of 19th March, 1943, and more recently, in the Directive No. 2094/1/A of 3rd December, 1944, of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Fourteenth Army. A corresponding policy of generosity towards Public Servants who remained at their posts during the Japanese occupation has been laid down in letter No. 7/CA.6 of 18th June, 1943, of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Burma, and in the Memorandum recently issued by His Majesty's Government.

2. The results of our policy have been most satisfactory and are exemplified by the large number of Burmans who have returned to positions of trust under the Military Administration and the generally quiet state of the country occupied by British Forces.

3. I have no reason to suppose that there will be any disposition on the part of British personnel to deviate from the policy laid down, but I am conscious of the fact that, with the capture of Rangoon and our contact with personnel of the former "Burma National Army" and large numbers of servants of the Ba Maw administration, a situation has arisen in which members of our forces must frequently find themselves in difficulty in interpreting this policy in the case of persons suspected of unlawful behaviour during the Japanese occupation. The draft directive on this subject still awaits the approval of His Majesty's Government, which is expected very shortly. Meanwhile, as a guide to those dealing with suspects in the field, I have approved the instructions issued in Commander-in-Chief, Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia Directive No. 21802/A1 of 16th May, 1945, subject to any amendments necessitated by my instructions in paragraph 9 below and provided all concerned have continually in mind the considerations contained in paragraphs 4 to 8 below.

4. The guiding principle which I am determined shall be observed is that no person shall suffer on account of political opinions honestly held, whether now or in the past, even if these may have been anti-British, but only on account of proven crimes against the criminal law or actions repugnant to humanity. This principle is no more than an elementary point of British justice but it is perhaps advisable to emphasise the reasons why it must be pursued with particular fidelity in the present circumstances.

5. The situation in Burma in 1942 was very complex. It is hardly surprising that the sincere Nationalist elements in the country, left unarmed and unorganised at the mercy of the Japanese, should have been politically confused and should have collaborated with them particularly when promised their independence. This must at the time have seemed the only step they could reasonably take; and in our treatment of them we should not confuse them with the treacherous elements who were already intriguing with the Japanese before the war or with war criminals who have assisted the Japanese in the perpetration of atrocities.

6. The Japanese have betrayed the Burmese Nationalists; first of all, politically, since their country's so-called independence proved illusory, and now militarily as well, since the Japanese are proving unable to hold the country against our return. Now is our chance to show the politically-active Burmans, who have come to realise that their hopes for the future cannot lie along the road of collaboration with the Japanese, that we are sincere in our expressed desire to help the Burmese to help themselves. It is not my policy, therefore, that any section of the population shall be victimised for the political attitude they may have adopted at any time during the war, or in the period immediately preceding it, unless it can be proved that they consistently supported the Japanese to the end, and actively opposed our return.

7. As regards the B.N.A. and the A.F.O., they have risen before it was clear to them that British Forces would, or could, come to their rescue. And it can be said that they are rising for their own ends, and not for love of us. I think it would be unrealistic on our part to suppose that the people of any nation engage in war except in their own interests, however praiseworthy these may be. It is important, however, that the Burmese should not be made to feel that their interests and our own are mutually exclusive; and the surest way to avoid this, is to see to it that the conduct of our Civil Affairs contrasts favourably with the way in which the Japanese conducted theirs.

8. Apart from the dictates of commonsense and our own inclination to build up good feeling between the Burmans and ourselves, it is beyond question that the outside world will show great interest in our handling of the population of Burma during the period of Military Administration. I am therefore anxious not only that no political victimisation should be permitted during the period of Military Administration, but that no possible opportunity should be given for allegations, however unfounded, that such victimisation is occurring.

9. In consequence I am anxious to assure myself that no case occurs in which the British authorities could possibly be accused of having used the present circumstances as an opportunity for political victimisation. I have therefore arranged that the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Burma:—

(*i*) will report to me immediately the circumstances of any prosecution, resulting in a sentence other than that of death, which might be regarded as having political implications; and

(*ii*) will report to me by signal, with his recommendations, before confirmation of the sentence, the circumstances of any such prosecution resulting in a sentence of death, and will await my comments before proceeding to confirm the sentence.

10. The above is to be brought to the notice of all Burma Civil Affairs Officers and of all other persons in your forces likely to be concerned in the treatment of suspects in Burma.

11. As soon as the draft directive referred to in paragraph 3 above has received the approval of His Majesty's Government, I will arrange to have a summary produced of all statements of policy which have been issued in connection with Burma.

(Sd.) LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN,
*Supreme Allied Commander*

*2nd June, 1945*

# APPENDIX G

## INSTRUMENT OF SURRENDER OF JAPANESE IN S.E.A.C.
## 12TH SEPTEMBER 1945

INTRUMENT OF SURRENDER OF JAPANESE FORCES UNDER THE COMMAND OR CONTROL OF THE SUPREME COMMANDER, JAPANESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES, SOUTHERN REGIONS, WITHIN THE OPERATIONAL THEATRE OF THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, SOUTH-EAST ASIA

1. In pursuance of and in compliance with:

(*a*) The Instrument of Surrender signed by the Japanese plenipotentiaries by command and on behalf of the Emperor of Japan, the Japanese Government, and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters at Tokyo on 2nd September, 1945;

(*b*) General Order No. 1, promulgated at the same place and on the same date;

(*c*) The Local Agreement made by the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, with the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia at Rangoon on 27th August, 1945;

to all of which Instrument of Surrender, General Order and Local Agreement this present Instrument is complementary and which it in no way supersedes, the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions (Field-Marshal Count Terauchi) does hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia (Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten) himself and all Japanese sea, ground, air and auxiliary forces under his command or control and within the operational theatre of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.

2. The Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, undertakes to ensure that all orders and instructions that may be issued from time to time by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or by any of his subordinate Naval, Military or Air Force Commanders of whatever rank acting in his name, are scrupulously and promptly obeyed by all Japanese sea, ground, air and auxiliary forces under the command or control of the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, and within the operational theatre of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia.

3. Any disobedience of, or delay or failure to comply with, orders or instructions issued by the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or issued on his behalf by any of his subordinate Naval, Military or Air Force Commanders of whatever rank, and any action which the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, or his subordinate Commanders, acting on his behalf, may determine to be detrimental to the Allied Powers, will be dealt with as the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, may decide.

4. This Instrument takes effect from the time and date of signing.

5. This Instrument is drawn up in the English language, which is the only authentic version. In any case of doubt as to intention or meaning, the decision of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia, is final. It is the responsibility of the Supreme Commander, Japanese Expeditionary Forces, Southern Regions, to make such translation into Japanese as he may require.

Signed at Singapore at 0341 hours (G.M.T.) on 12th September, 1945.

(Sd.) SEISHIRO ITAGAKI,
for *Supreme Commander,*
*Japanese Expeditionary Forces,*
*Southern Regions.*

Field-Marshal Count Terauchi's Seal.

(Sd.) LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN,
*Supreme Allied Commander; South-East Asia.*

☼

STATEMENT BY SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, SOUTH-EAST ASIA, MADE AT SURRENDER CEREMONY, HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, SINGAPORE, ON 12TH SEPTEMBER, 1945

"I have come here today to receive the formal surrender of all the Japanese Forces within the South-East Asia Command. I have received the following telegram from the Supreme Commander of the Japanese Forces concerned, Field-Marshal Count Terauchi:—

'The most important occasion of the formal surrender signing at Singapore draws near, the significance of which is no less great to me than to Your Excellency. It is extremely regretful that my

ill health prevents me from attending and signing it personally and that I am unable to pay homage to Your Excellency. I hereby notify Your Excellency that I have fully empowered General Itagaki, the highest senior general in Japanese armies, and send him on my behalf. '

On hearing of Field-Marshal Terauchi's illness, I sent my own doctor, Surgeon-Captain Birt, Royal Navy, to examine him, and he certifies that the Field-Marshal is suffering from the effects of a stroke. In the circumstances I have decided to accept the surrender from General Itagaki today, but I have warned the Field-Marshal that I shall expect him to make his personal surrender to me as soon as he is fit enough to do so.[1]

In addition to our Naval, Military and Air forces which we have present in Singapore today, a large fleet is anchored off Port Swettenham and Port Dixon, and a large force started disembarking from them at daylight on the 9th September. When I visited the force yesterday, there were 100,000 men ashore. This invasion would have taken place on 9th September whether the Japanese had resisted or not, and I wish to make it entirely clear to General Itagaki that he is surrendering to superior force here in Singapore.

I now call upon General Itagaki to produce his credentials."

☼ ☼

### Credentials of General Itagaki

I, the undersigned, hereby authorise General Seishiro Itagaki, Commander of the Imperial Japanese Seventh Area Army, to make, for and in the name of myself, arrangements and sign an instrument or instruments, with the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, South-East Asia, concerning the formal surrender of all the Imperial Japanese Army, Naval, Air and Auxiliary Forces which are under my command or control and are within the operational theatre of the Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia[2].

Done at Saigon this 10th day of the 9th month of the 20th year of Showa corresponding to the 10th of September, 1945, of the Christian era.

(L.S.)

(Sd.) Hisaichi Terauchi,
*Field-Marshal, Count,*
*Supreme Commander of the Imperial Japanese Forces, Southern Regions.*
(Seal).

☼ ☼ ☼

The following Allied representatives were seated at the table :—

- Lieut.-General Raymond A. Wheeler (U.S. Army: Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, S.E.A.).
- Admiral Sir Arthur Power (Allied Fleet).
- General Sir William Slim (Allied Land Forces).
- Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park (Allied Air Forces).
- General Leclerc (France).
- Major-General Feng Yee (China).
- Air Vice-Marshal A. T. Cole (Australia).
- Brigadier K. S. Thimayya (India).
- Colonel Buurman van Vreeden (Netherlands: representing Admiral Helfrich, who was on the sick list).

The Japanese delegates were :—

- General Itagaki (7 Area Army—Singapore) representing Field-Marshal Count Terauchi.
- General Kimura (Burma Area Army).
- Vice-Admiral Fukudome (Singapore Fleet).
- Vice-Admiral Shibata (N.E.I. Fleet).
- Lieut.-General Nakamura (18 Area Army—Siam).
- Lieut.-General Kinoshita (Japanese Army Air Force).
- Lieut.-General Numata (Chief of Staff to Field-Marshal Count Terauchi).

[1] Field-Marshal Count Terauchi made his personal surrender to the Supreme Allied Commander at Saigon on 30th November; and died in 1946 (See 'B', paragraph 650).

[2] The total number of Japanese of all services surrendered was 738,400.

# ANNEXURE 1

# THE S.E.A.C. GROUP OF HEADQUARTERS

FIG. 1. Chain of Command after integration of the Allied Air Forces—14th December 1943

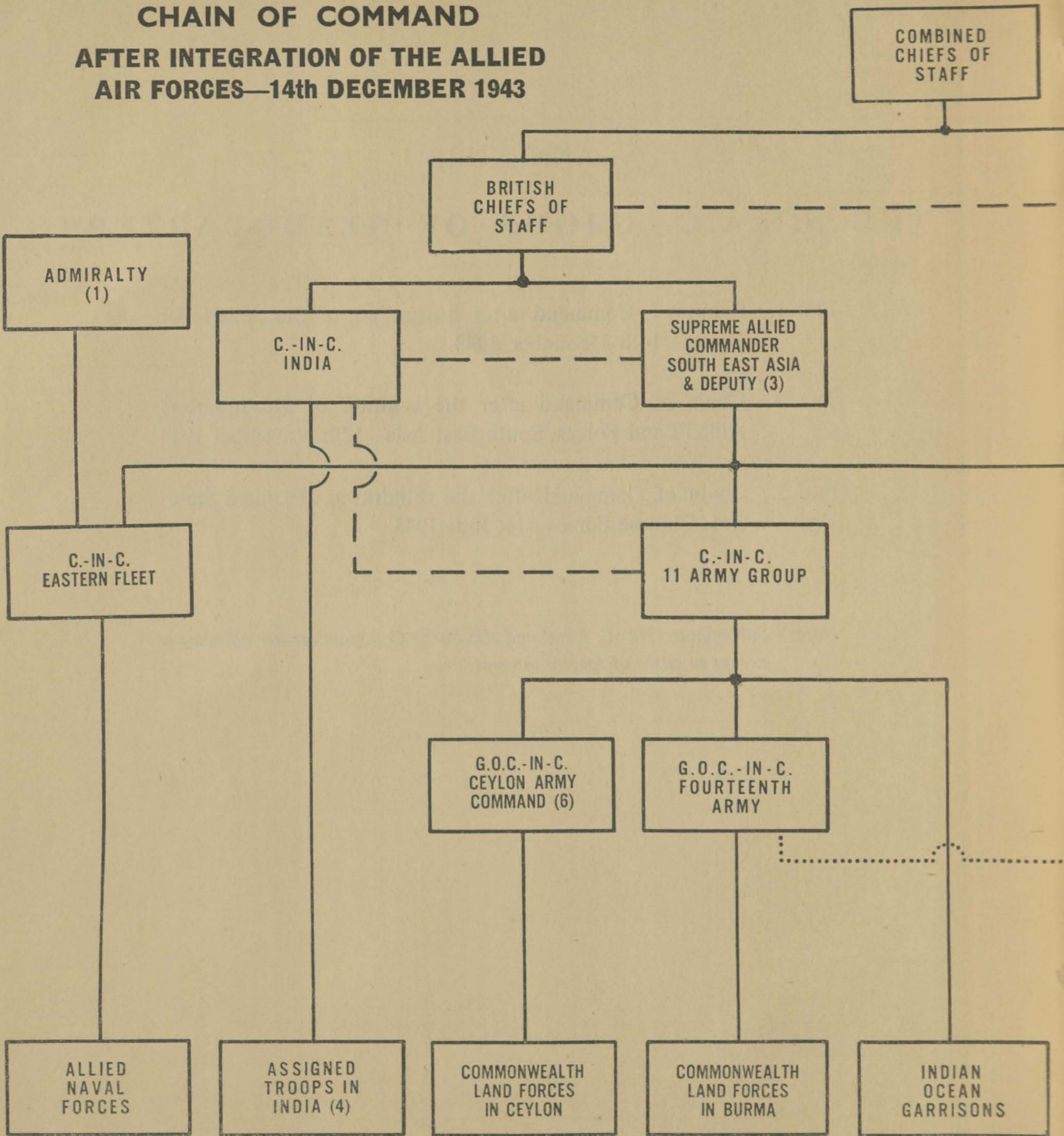
FIG. 2. Chain of Command after the creation of Headquarters Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia--12th November 1944

FIG. 3. Chain of Command after the withdrawal of United States and Chinese Forces—1st June 1945

*Note:—Subordinate Naval, Land and Air Force Commanders are not shown except in cases of special interest.*

## CHAIN OF COMMAND

### AFTER INTEGRATION OF THE ALLIED AIR FORCES—14th DECEMBER 1943



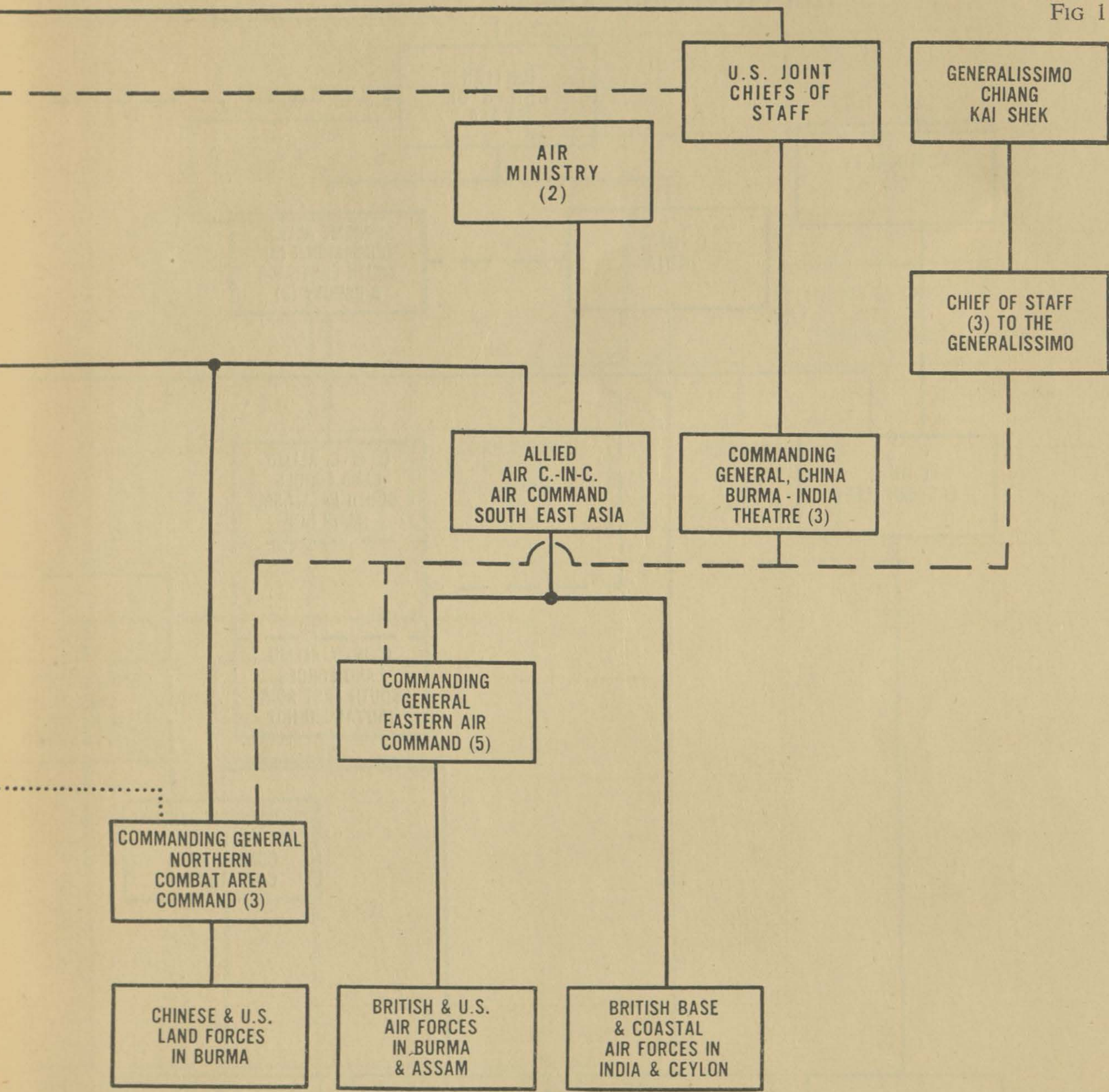

(1) The C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet (and, from 22nd November, 1944, the C.-in-C. East Indies Fleet) was directly responsible to the Admiralty in all matters connected with the security of sea communications in the Indian Ocean both inside and outside the area of South-East Asia Command, and with offensive action against the enemy's naval forces. (See 'A', paragraph 29).

(2) The Allied Air C.-in-C. was directly responsible to the Air Ministry for the control of Coastal Air Forces, which were operated in accordance with the requirements of the C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet. (See 'A', paragraph 34).

(3) Until 21st October 1944 the posts of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia; Commanding General China-Burma-India theatre; Commanding-General Northern Combat Area Command; and Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo; were all held by Lieut.- General Stilwell. Until 20th June, 1944, in his capacity as Commanding General, Northern Combat Area Command, he was under the operational control of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Fourteenth Army. From that date until 21st October 1944 he came under the direct command of the Supreme Allied Commander.

(4) See 'A', paragraph 32.

FIG 1




(5) The Commanding General, Eastern Air Command, besides being the Allied Air Commander for the Burma Campaign was also responsible for the air protection of Hump operations. In all other respects these operations were controlled jointly by the Commanding-General China - Burma - India theatre and the United States Air Transport Command. (See 'B', paragraphs 19 and 20).

(6) G.O.C.-in-C. Ceylon Army Command was under the Supreme Allied Commander through C.-in-C. Ceylon (who was also under S.A.C.) for defence of Ceylon.

KEY

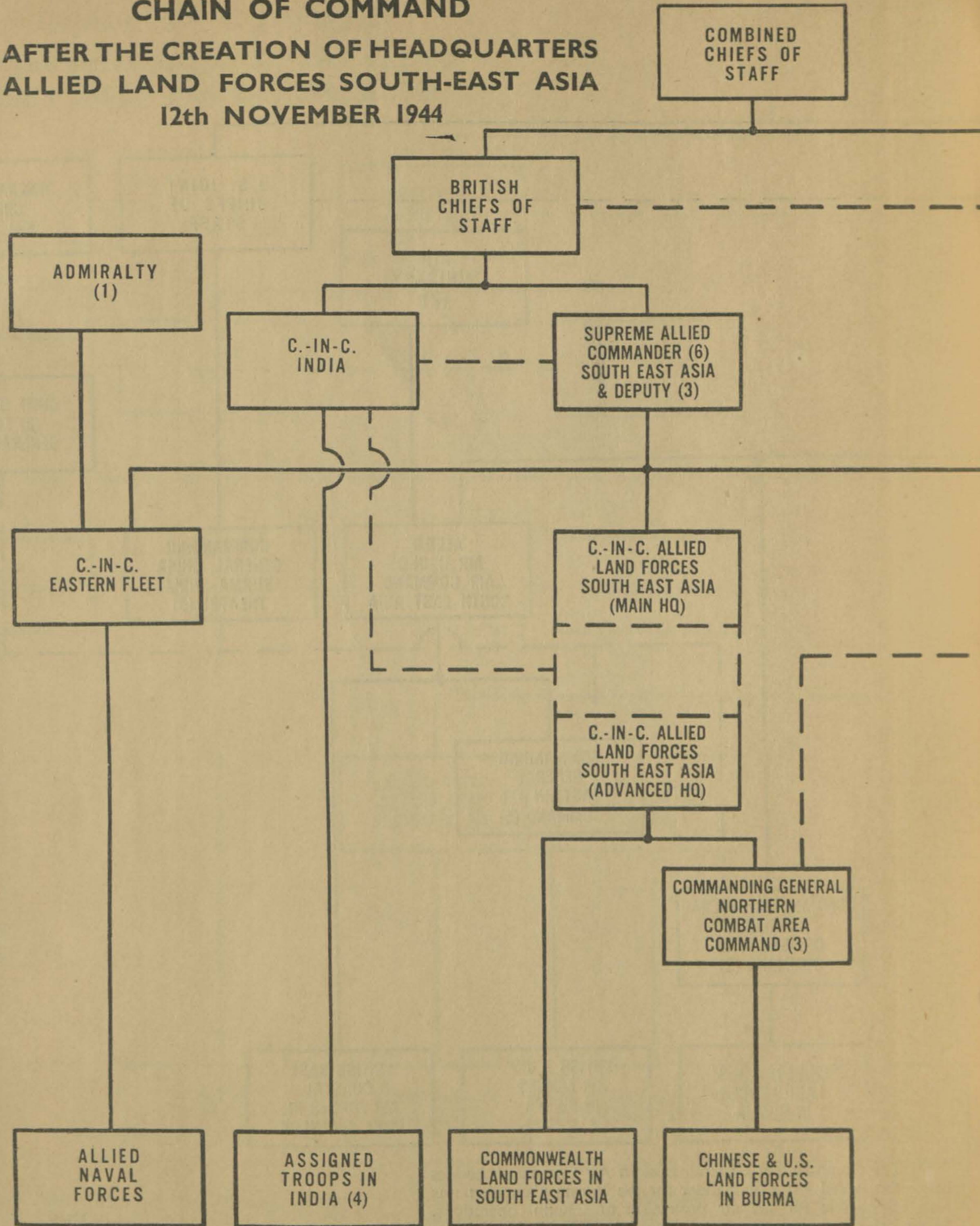
DIRECT COMMAND ... ... ... ... ————

LIAISON ... ... ... ... ... — — — —

TEMPORARY OPERATIONAL CONTROL ... ..........

# CHAIN OF COMMAND

## AFTER THE CREATION OF HEADQUARTERS ALLIED LAND FORCES SOUTH-EAST ASIA 12th NOVEMBER 1944

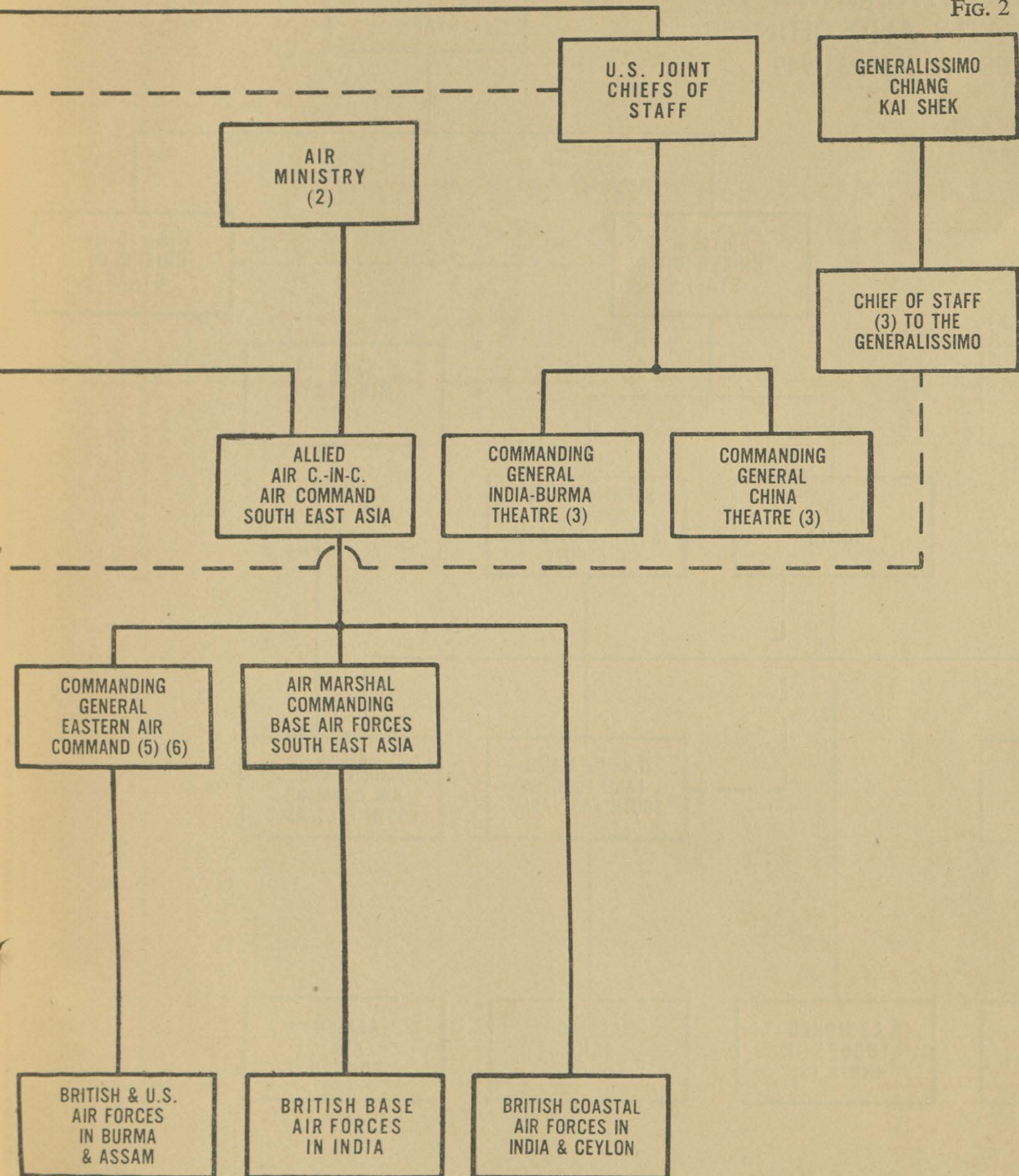



(1) See Fig. 1.

(2) See Fig. 1.

(3) Lieut.-General Stilwell was recalled to the United States on the 21st October 1944. He was succeeded as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander by Lieut.-General Wheeler. The China-Burma-India theatre was divided into China (Lieut.-General Wedemeyer) and India-Burma (Lieut.-General Sultan) theatres. Lieut.-General Wedemeyer also became Chief of Staff to the Generalissimo. Lieut.-General Sultan also took over command of Northern Combat Area Command.

Fig. 2




(4) See Fig. 1.

(5) See Fig. 1.

(6) During February and March 1945 the United States 20th Bomber Command of Super Fortresses (B-29) was put under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander. He delegated his authority in these matters to the Allied Air Commander-in-Chief. Operational Control of the Super Fortresses was vested in the Commanding General, Eastern Air Command.

KEY

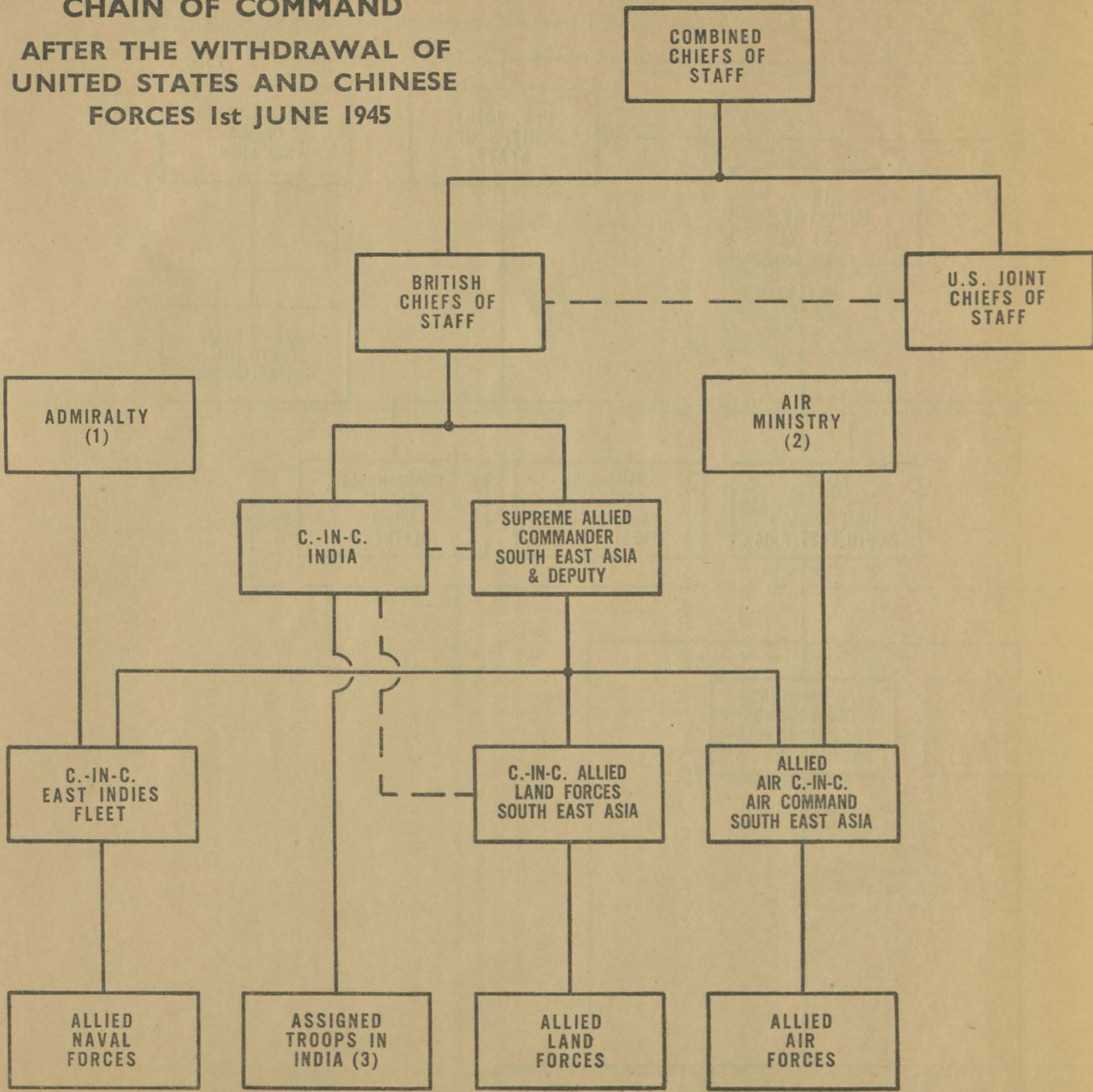
DIRECT COMMAND ... ... ... ———————

LIAISON ... ... ... ... — — — — — —

FIG. 3

## CHAIN OF COMMAND

### AFTER THE WITHDRAWAL OF UNITED STATES AND CHINESE FORCES 1st JUNE 1945




(1) See Fig. 1.

(2) See Fig. 1.

(3) See 'A', paragraph 32.

KEY

DIRECT COMMAND ... ... ... ——————

LIAISON ... ... ... ... — — — — —

ANNEXURE 2

# JAPANESE ORGANISATION AND DISPOSITIONS

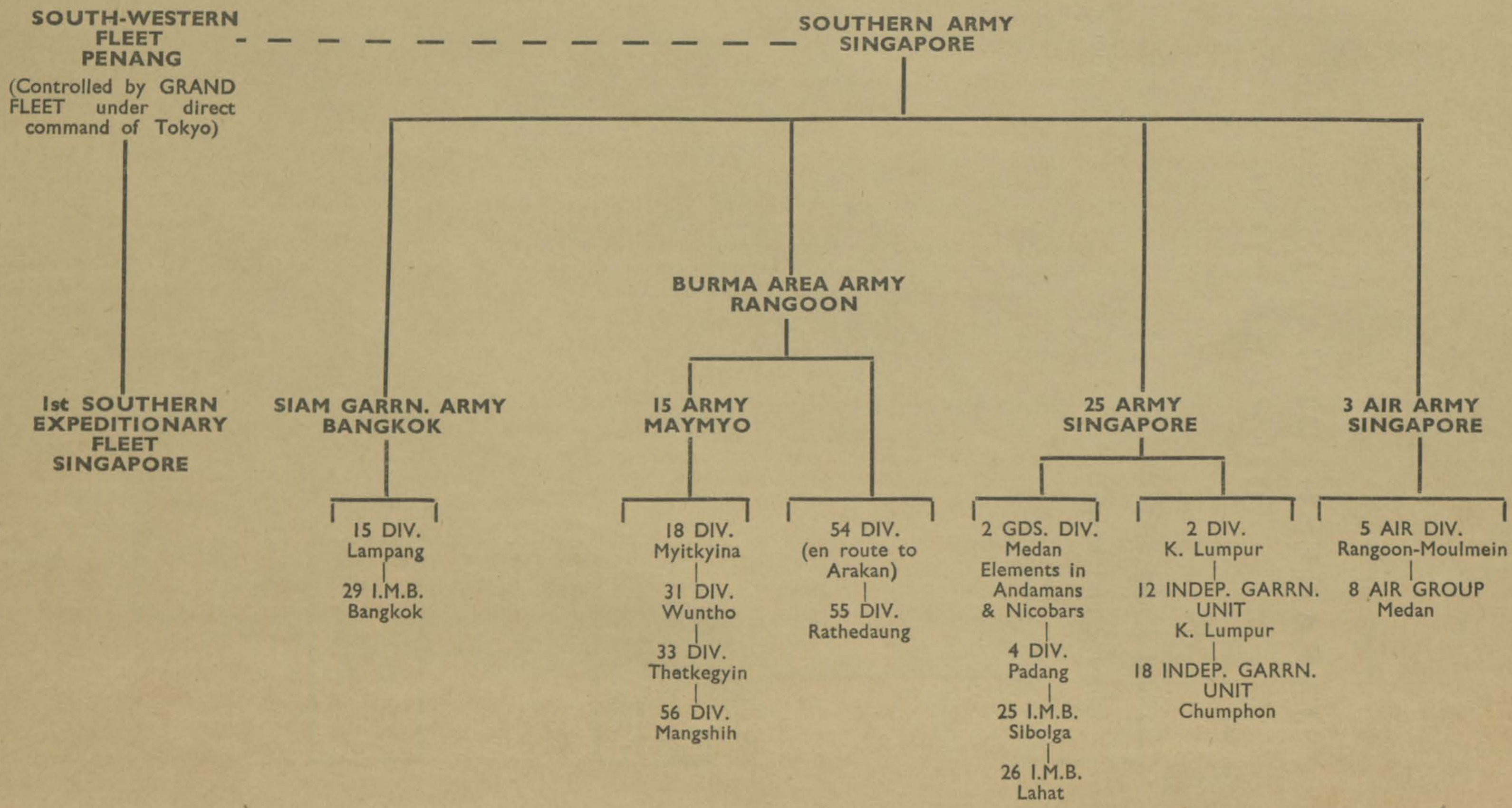

Chart 1 and Map A . . . November 1943

Chart 2 and Map B . . . August 1945

CHART I

# JAPANESE ORGANISATION & DISPOSITIONS

NOVEMBER 1943



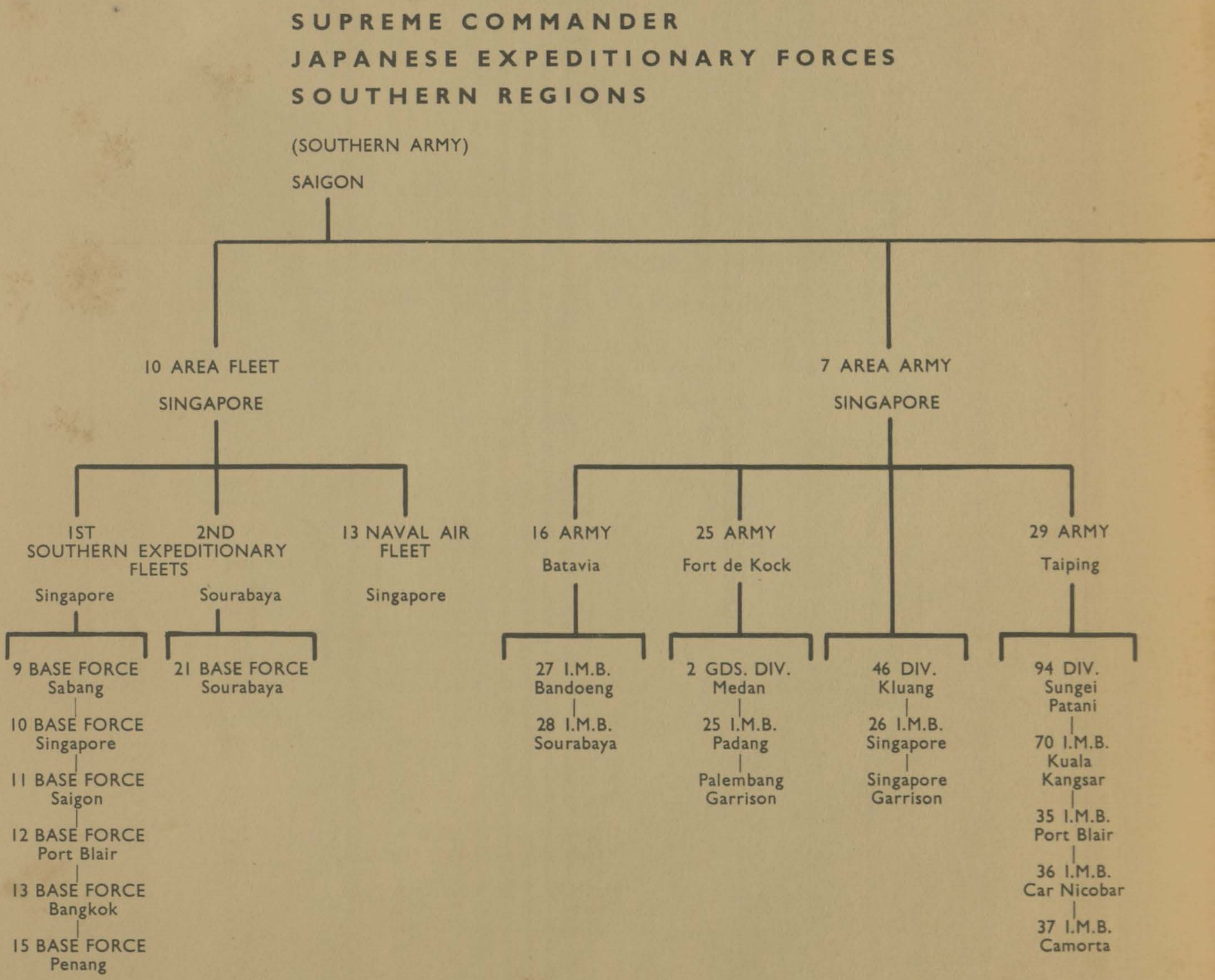

NOTES. I.M.B.=Independent Mixed Brigade.
South-Western Fleet was co-operating with Southern Army.

# MAP A.



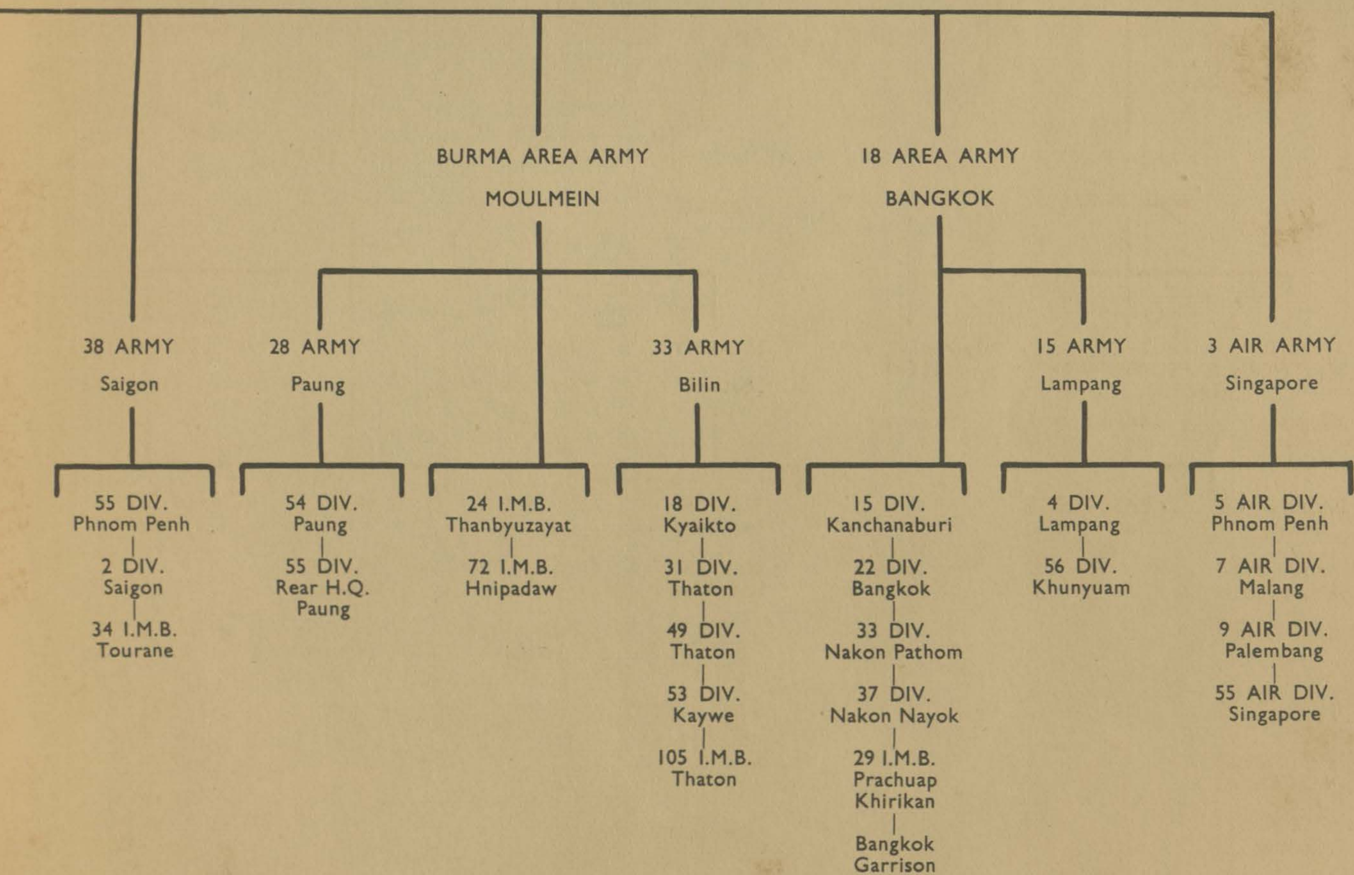
JAPANESE DISPOSITIONS
NOVEMBER 1943
CHINA
INDO CHINA
SIAM
MALAYA
SUMATRA
BORNEO
JAVA
HAINAN
BAY of BENGAL
INDIAN OCEAN
SOUTH CHINA SEA
BURMA AREA ARMY
SIAM GARRISON ARMY
INDO CHINA GARRISON ARMY
25 ARMY
BORNEO GARRISON ARMY
16 ARMY
SOUTHERN ARMY
15
B.A.A.
S.G.A.
7
25
Sadiya
Myitkyina
Mangshih
Wuntho
Thetkegyin
Maymyo
Rathedaung
Lampang
Rangoon
Moulmein
Bangkok
Hanoi
Saigon
Andaman Is
Nicobar Is
Chumphon
Penang
Medan
Kuala Lumpur
Sibolga
Singapore
Padang
Lahat
Batavia
Kuching
Sapong
Irrawaddy
LEGEND
South East Asia Command Boundary
JAPANESE BOUNDARIES
Burma Area Army
Siam Garrison Army
25 Army
HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHERN ARMY
EXPEDITIONARY FLEET
ARMY
AREA FLEET
AREA ARMY
AIR ARMY
Division or Equivalent
Brigade or Equivalent
Scale of Miles
Miles 100 50 0 100 Miles
90°
100°
110°
120°
30°
20°
10°
0

# Chart 2 JAPANESE ORGANISATION




Footnote : I.M.B. = Independent Mixed Brigade

# AND DISPOSITIONS, AUGUST 1945



# MAP B.



JAPANESE DISPOSITIONS
AUGUST 1945
BHUTAN
Sadiya
Chungking
Yangtze
Myitkyina
Kunming
CHINA
Mandalay
BURMA
Akyab
Hanoi
BAY OF BENGAL
Irrawaddy
Salween
Khun Yuam
Lampang
15
INDO CHINA
HAINAN
RANGOON
BURMA AREA ARMY (SEE INSET)
Moulmein
SIAM
18 AREA ARMY
Hue
Tourane
18
Kanchana Buri
Nakon Pathon
BANGKOK
Nakon Nayok
38 ARMY
UNDER DIRECT CONTROL SOUTHERN ARMY
ANDAMAN Is
Phnom Penh
Southern Army
Port Blair
Prachuap Khirikan
38
Saigon
INDIAN OCEAN
Car Nicobar I.
Camorta I.
NICOBAR Is
29 ARMY
SOUTH CHINA SEA
Sabang
Sungei Patani
George Town
Penang
29
Taiping
Kuala Kangsar
MALAYA
Brunei
Medan
7 AREA ARMY
SUMATRA
Malacca
Kluang
25 ARMY
SINGAPORE
AREA UNDER DIRECT CONTROL OF 7 AREA ARMY
Kuching
37 ARMY
NOT IN S.E.A.C.'s AREA
BORNEO
25
Fort de Kock
Padang
Palembang
16
Sunda Str.
Batavia
Bandoeng
16 ARMY
JAVA
Soerabaja
Malang
Scale 100 50 0 100 Miles
LEGEND
South East Asia Command Boundary
Japanese Area Boundaries:–
BURMA AREA ARMY
18 AREA ARMY
7 AREA ARMY
ARMIES UNDER 7 AREA ARMY
38 ARMY (Under direct control of Southern Army)
HEADQUARTERS
SOUTHERN ARMY
Area Fleet
Area Army
Air Army
Expeditionary Fleet
Army
Naval Air Fleet
Division or Equivalent
Brigade or Equivalent
Maungpoke
Toungoo
Khun Yuam
Chengmai
Sittang
Salween
BURMA AREA ARMY
Hawt
18 AREA ARMY
Kaywe
Kyaikto
33
Pegu
Bilin
28
Thaton
RANGOON
Paung
Moulmein
GULF OF MARTABAN
Hnipadaw
Amherst
Thanbyuzayat
90°
100°
110°
120°
30°
20°
10°
0°

# ANNEXURE 3

## The Topography and Climate of Burma

### Topography

1. A brief description of the topography of the Indo-Burmese frontier will greatly assist in giving a true picture of the war in this theatre.

2. This frontier is marked by a series of precipitous mountain ranges running north-east—south-west. They are intersected by fast rivers running in deep valleys and are generally covered with the most dense jungle. The highest mountains lie in the north where peaks reach a height of twelve thousand feet. In the south they rise generally to three or four thousand feet and malaria and scrub typhus are endemic below these heights.

3. Apart from the Tamu and Tiddim mule tracks, no form of road connecting India and Burma existed prior to 1942. During the course of the war the following main road systems were built on the Central and N.C.A.C. fronts[1]:—

### Central Front Road Systems

(Built by engineers of 4 Corps and the Indian Tea Planters. See Map 18, facing page 72.)

*The Manipur Road* from Dimapur to Imphal (which was originally built as a single fair-weather cart track by Indian sappers during one of the expeditions in the 'eighties) was developed into a broad tarmacadam main road.

From Imphal the two existing mule tracks into Burma were developed into two-way semi-all-weather roads as follows:—

*The Tamu Road* from Imphal to Kalewa via Palel and Tamu.

*The Tiddim Road*, also from Imphal to Kalewa but further west via Tiddim and Kalemyo, mostly rebuilt on new alignments at heights of up to 8,000 feet.

### Northern Combat Area Command Road System

(Built by U.S. Army engineers and local labour. See Map 27, page 120.)

*The Stilwell Road* from Ledo through the Pangsau Pass via Myitkyina and Namkham to join the Old Burma Road into China at Milestone 105, south of Wanting (Map 7, *E.*7.). This was an exceptionally wide metalled road driven through virgin jungle and in one place carried on a mile-long causeway.

4. On the Burmese side of the frontier lie the basins of the Chindwin and Irrawaddy rivers. These two rivers allow navigation as far north as Myitkyina and Tamanthi respectively, though the flow of traffic is restricted by seasonal fluctuations. Nevertheless, with the railway which runs north from Rangoon to Myitkyina, these rivers provided the enemy with excellent lines of communication almost to the frontier of India. The road system also, down the Irrawaddy valley and the line of the railway further east, is fairly good, though liable to serious interruption during the monsoons. It will be obvious from this that in any offensive operations by us the Japanese would enjoy the great advantage of being able to concentrate quickly against either of the two roads leading over the mountain barrier in Assam or Northern Burma.

5. In Arakan—on the coastal strip—our forces were faced with a multiplicity of small streams or "chaungs" which proved almost as stubborn an obstacle as the jungle-covered hills. Especially during the monsoons were they a nuisance; a small, fordable stream often becoming a raging torrent difficult for heavy transport to cross. Though we used some of these chaungs for water transport, the Japanese, based at Akyab, controlled the mouths of the two main rivers, the Mayu and the Kaladan, so that our use of inland water transport was comparatively limited on this front until Akyab had been captured.

### Climate

6. The climate of Burma is controlled primarily by the north-east and south-west monsoons. The north-east monsoon lasts from November to February or March and is distinguished by bright day conditions and generally clear night skies. The south-west monsoon season lasts from mid-May to mid-October and is accompanied by much cloud by day and night and by heavy rainfall. Its onset is often quite sudden—though usually preceded by intermittent rain at the end of April and early in May. It is this season that is commonly referred to as "The Monsoon".

7. Between the two monsoon periods, April and May constitute the hot season, with heavy thunderstorms; while October is a month of gradual transition from wet to dry. Tropical cyclones and tropical

[1] See also Annexure 6, paragraphs 4 and 5.

depressions are fairly frequent in the Bay of Bengal between April and December, the severest storms occurring in the transitional months before and after the south-west monsoon.

### The Monsoon

8. Rainfall during the south-west monsoon is very heavy, varying from 32·6 in. to 206·8 in. each year at different places. Along the coast the frequency of heavy falls of rain is very high. Falls of over 3 in. in 24 hours occur on an average about twelve times a year on the Arakan coast, while around Sandoway the average is twenty times a year. Falls of over 5 in. in 24 hours occur on an average about six or seven times a year around Akyab. Along the Tenasserim coast the frequency is rather lower—particularly south of Mergui. Over the Irrawaddy Delta falls of over 3 in. in 24 hours occur on an average about three or four days a year. Falls of over 15 in. in 24 hours have been recorded all along the Burma coast, with the exception of the Irrawaddy Delta. As regards the interior, at Mandalay a fall of 3 in. in 24 hours is recorded at least once in most years; but at Bhamo such falls are twice as common. Throughout the south-west monsoon period the average rainfall on a rainy day exceeds 1 in. all along the Burma coast, and in July exceeds 2 in. on the Arakan coast. (It may be noted that in London the average monthly rainfall is 2 in.).

9. Flooding from the monsoon rains occurs along the Irrawaddy and Sittang during the summer months.

10. Generally speaking, the temperatures are high at all seasons. From March to May they are at their highest, with 100 deg. exceeded at many inland places in the hot part of the day. However, the effects of these high temperatures are somewhat modified by the lower relative humidities of that season and on the coast by the sea breezes. During the south-west monsoon both temperatures and humidities are high and combine to impose a severe strain on the human body.

### Leeches

11. One thing may also be mentioned here which caused us great trouble particularly during the monsoon; the prevalence of leeches. With the ardour of the campaign and the unhealthiness of much of the country, the men had little physical reserve with which to combat the effects of leeches which besides sucking their blood often produced sores. Nor were humans the only sufferers, the pack transport animals also being affected by this pest.

# ANNEXURE 4

## Air and Ground Supply Committee

1. The Air and Ground Supply Committee[1] set up by the Supreme Allied Commander under his Deputy Principal Administrative officer, Major-General (later Sir Reginald) Denning, submitted its final report on the 7th May, 1945, though many of its recommendations had been put forward as soon as they were determined and, when approved by the Supreme Allied Commander after discussion with his Commanders-in-Chief, had been implemented at once. Formal approval to the recommendations of the report as a whole was given on the 18th May. The gist of the report was to the effect that:—

(*a*) The Air Force had stated the tonnages it was possible for them to lift;

(*b*) The Army had made the necessary tonnages available at the places required;

(*c*) The Air Forces had lifted those tonnages;

(*d*) Great as had been the achievement of supply by air in the theatre, the Committee had certain recommendations to make which, in its opinion, would enable the capacity of the available aircraft to be used to even greater advantage; and

(*e*) Some increase in the lift of the ground lines of communication could be achieved by the re-deployment of existing resources.

2. In addition to making many recommendations on matters of detail, the Committee reached the following four important conclusions, which are worthy of special note and therefore are quoted in full:—

(*a*) As an emergency measure for a period not exceeding one month, the air-lift could be still further increased with the present organisation and without permanent ill effects by operating aircraft up to 240 hours per month;

(*b*) An appreciable permanent increase in air-lift could only be obtained through the provision of additional aircraft, together with the requisite maintenance backing and the bases from which to operate;

(*c*) An appreciable increase in the lift of the ground line of communication could only be achieved by the provision of additional resources; and

(*d*) The proven flexibility, speed and reliability of air-supply justified a revised conception of reserve holding in forward areas.

3. Particular attention is drawn to the first conclusion, as obviously its repercussions were far-reaching. The sustained monthly rate of flying laid down by the Air Ministry was 100 hours per aircraft and by the U.S. War Department 120 hours per aircraft. By mutual agreement this had already been increased to 125 hours per aircraft per month. The assigned transport aircraft in S.E.A.C. had already exceeded that amount, having flown in March on an average 186 hours per aircraft per month[2]. An increase in the rate to 240 hours per aircraft per month in an area in which flying conditions are notoriously some of the worst in the world, was now proposed. But the results achieved by such an increase would be of immense value and would enable supply to the troops to keep pace with the rate of their advance. After careful consideration the Supreme Allied Commander decided that this conclusion be agreed to and put into effect.

4. In accordance also with the Committee's fourth conclusion, a reduction was made in reserve holdings in the forward area, and this reduced the tonnages which had to be carried over the ground line of communication which had been greatly over-strained. The other conclusions and recommendations of the Committee were unhesitatingly confirmed, and if not already done, were immediately put into effect. Thus it was designed to ensure that henceforth the Army and the Air Forces would work as one and in complete accord, to get forward the maximum amount of supplies.

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[1] See 'B', paragraphs 515 and 516.

[2] See 'B', paragraphs 458, 485 and 486.

# ANNEXURE 5

## MEDICAL SERVICES IN S.E.A.C.

### FORMATION OF THE MEDICAL ADVISORY DIVISION

1. It was recognised that the terrain of the South-East Asia theatre was one of the most unhealthy in the world. This had already been borne out by the results of the campaigns in Burma during 1942-43, in which sick rates had been up to eight per 1,000 per day (2,900 per 1,000 per annum) with one peak week in the Arakan fighting of 15 per 1,000 per day (5,475 per 1,000 per annum).

2. The Supreme Allied Commander obtained the Prime Minister's concurrence to the formation of a high-level Medical Advisory Division (M.A.D.) on his staff, composed of experts in tropical medicine and hygiene from each service and the U.S. Army.

3. This division proved itself of great value. It had no executive function, but maintained close collaboration with all the medical services of the Command, of India, Australia and the Home Commands, the Medical Department of the U.S. Army and the principal medical research societies.

4. Within S.E.A.C. co-ordination and liaison were maintained firstly by periodical meetings at two-monthly intervals with the heads of all the medical services of the forces, the Civil Governments and India Command; secondly by similar meetings with senior hygiene and anti-malarial experts, and thirdly by frequent personal visits to all important areas.

5. At the same time, much credit is due to the Directors of Medical Services India Command and A.L.F.S.E.A. and to the medical staffs working under them. The provision and supply of medical stores to South-East Asia Command was an achievement of the India Command. Over 90 per cent. of the medical units in South-East Asia Command were raised and equipped in India, and all these were maintained from India throughout the campaign. Of the above, 60 per cent. of the Medical Officers and 88 per cent. of Medical other ranks belonged to Indian services. In fact the whole of the medical services of India and South-East Asia Command worked together as a well-balanced machine.

### MEDICAL INTELLIGENCE SECTION

6. It being obvious from the beginning that medical Intelligence was of prime importance to the production and maintenance of an effective standard of hygiene in the Command, a special Intelligence section was set up, under a commissioned wardmaster, R.N., for obtaining and maintaining all possible over-all statistical records for use in the Command. This section proved to be of great value.[1]

### STATISTICAL DATA

7. The general reduction of diseases, in which M.A.D. had its full share, and the consequent saving in manpower is shown in the following tables.[2] The results in the final year of the campaign can be considered as really satisfactory and are a gratifying record of the work of the medical services, without which it might well have been impossible to carry the campaign in such terrain and climate to a victorious end.

*Sickness Rates*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1942 ... ... | 1,850 per 1,000 per annum |
| 1943 ... ... | 1,400 per 1,000 per annum |
| 1944 ... ... | 1,000 per 1,000 per annum |
| 1945 ... ... | 500 per 1,000 per annum |

*Average proportion of Battle Casualties to Sick Admissions*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1943 ... | 1 casualty to 120 sick. |
| 1944 ... | 1 casualty to 20 sick. |
| 1945 ... | 1 casualty to 10 sick (to August). |

*Admissions to hospital for A.L.F.S.E.A.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1944 | Peak number of casualties for one week ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1,668 |
| | Peak number of sick for one week... | 15,315 |
| 1945 | Peak number of casualties for one week ... ... ... ... ... ... | 2,027 |
| | Peak number of sick for one week... | 7,893 |

### MALARIA

8. From a review of the sickness during the previous two years on the Burma front and of campaigns in the Pacific areas, it was obvious that anti-malarial measures, with anti-malarial discipline as the first line of defence, were imperative if fighting efficiency was to be maintained. Repeated recommendations

[1] This section produced Map 6—" Malarial Zones of Burma and Assam " (preceding page 1).

[2] See also Charts 3 and 4 (pages 248 and 249).

were made on such measures with a close watch on the trend of sickness to see the results.

9. At the end of the war anti-malarial discipline and anti-malarial measures in the S.E.A. theatre were second to none.

MOSQUITO REPELLENTS

10. From careful investigation it was established that liquid dimethyl phthalate was far superior to other repellents previously used. Recommendations with subsequent action were made for provision with the result that extensive issue could be made in the final year.

MEPACRINE AS A SUPPRESSIVE

11. From contact with Australian medical services the value of suppressive mepacrine was learned. Eastern Army had already been employing this with benefit on the Arakan front and had been the first to introduce the daily continuous dose as a suppressive measure. But there had been great difficulty in obtaining any supplies and more so in obtaining the amounts required.

12. In mid-1943 the maximum amount available was a million tablets. M.A.D. together with the heads of all the medical services, using every possible means of demand and persuasion, succeeded in obtaining adequate supplies and their correct use to the extent (in 1945) of 40,000,000 tablets a month.

INSECTICIDES

13. This problem was closely studied. Much depended on obtaining some insecticide which would be available for really effective use to supplement discipline and suppressive mepacrine.

14. A close study of the literature available and consultations with the authorities in India, Britain and U.S.A. drew attention to the possibilities of D.D.T. This substance, discovered by a Swiss in 1875 and since then forgotten, had recently been receiving some attention in the U.S.A. for agricultural insect pests.

15. The possibilities of D.D.T. seemed to be so good that M.A.D. obtained small samples for experimental confirmation, and, becoming convinced of its superiority to all other insecticides, strongly pressed claims for large-scale production and provision. This was taken up in Britain and the U.S.A. with the result that in 1945 ample stocks became available for all purposes. It is now used in ground spraying as an anti-malarial larvicide, as a residual spray within buildings, as a direct anti-mosquito and anti-fly spray and as an aerial spray for large-scale insect control. In all these activities the M.A.D. played a leading part by advice and close personal liaison on the Burma front and in India, Britain, West Africa and the U.S.A.

DYSENTERY GROUP OF DISEASES

16. In view of the seriousness of this group of diseases in all tropical areas M.A.D. continually gave attention to possible means of reduction of the incidence and improvement in the treatment.

17. The provision of Sulpha drugs played a notable part. M.A.D. played an important part in obtaining urgent supplies of sulphagnanadine by air from Australia to cope with the dysentery group epidemic which occurred immediately after the Kohima battles. This was during a temporary shortage in the supplies provided by the India Command. The results were dramatic and fully justified the action taken.

18. In this group of diseases the introduction of D.D.T. as an efficient fly-killer played an important part and at last gave us a weapon with which it was really possible to prevent dysenteric epidemics.

SCRUB TYPHUS

19. Although this did not make a great statistical contribution to the non-effective rate, it was a disease of primary import to forces in the area for reasons of morale. Scrub typhus or Japanese river fever (tsutsugamushi), transmitted by the larva of the trombiculid mite, carried a fatality rate often as high as 20 per cent. or even higher in this theatre. The profound effects and conspicuous incidence led to a considerable dread of the disease among our troops.

20. Very little was known of the disease and less of any preventive measures. M.A.D. obtained world-wide contacts with experts and sponsored investigation into the cause and prevention of the disease. Scrub typhus research teams from the Medical Research Council (M.R.C.) in London, research teams of S.E.A.C. and India Command and a team from the Typhus Commission of the U.S.A. undertook to tackle the problems.

21. Local strains were isolated and despatched by air to the U.K., Middle East and U.S.A. for study and the production of any possible vaccine. Brilliant work in England produced a vaccine from the lungs of cotton rats, and a decision was made by the D.M.S., 11 Army Group, in consultation with M.A.D. and the M.R.C. typhus expert to press for production and provision on a large scale in S.E.A.C. for the forthcoming campaigns in Burma and Malaya. Supplies began to materialise but were not extensively used owing to our early victory.

# HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS

(THROUGH WOUNDS AND SICKNESS)

DECEMBER 1942 —— AUGUST 1945

DAILY RATE PER 1,000—BRITISH, INDIAN AND AFRICAN FORMATIONS IN BURMA

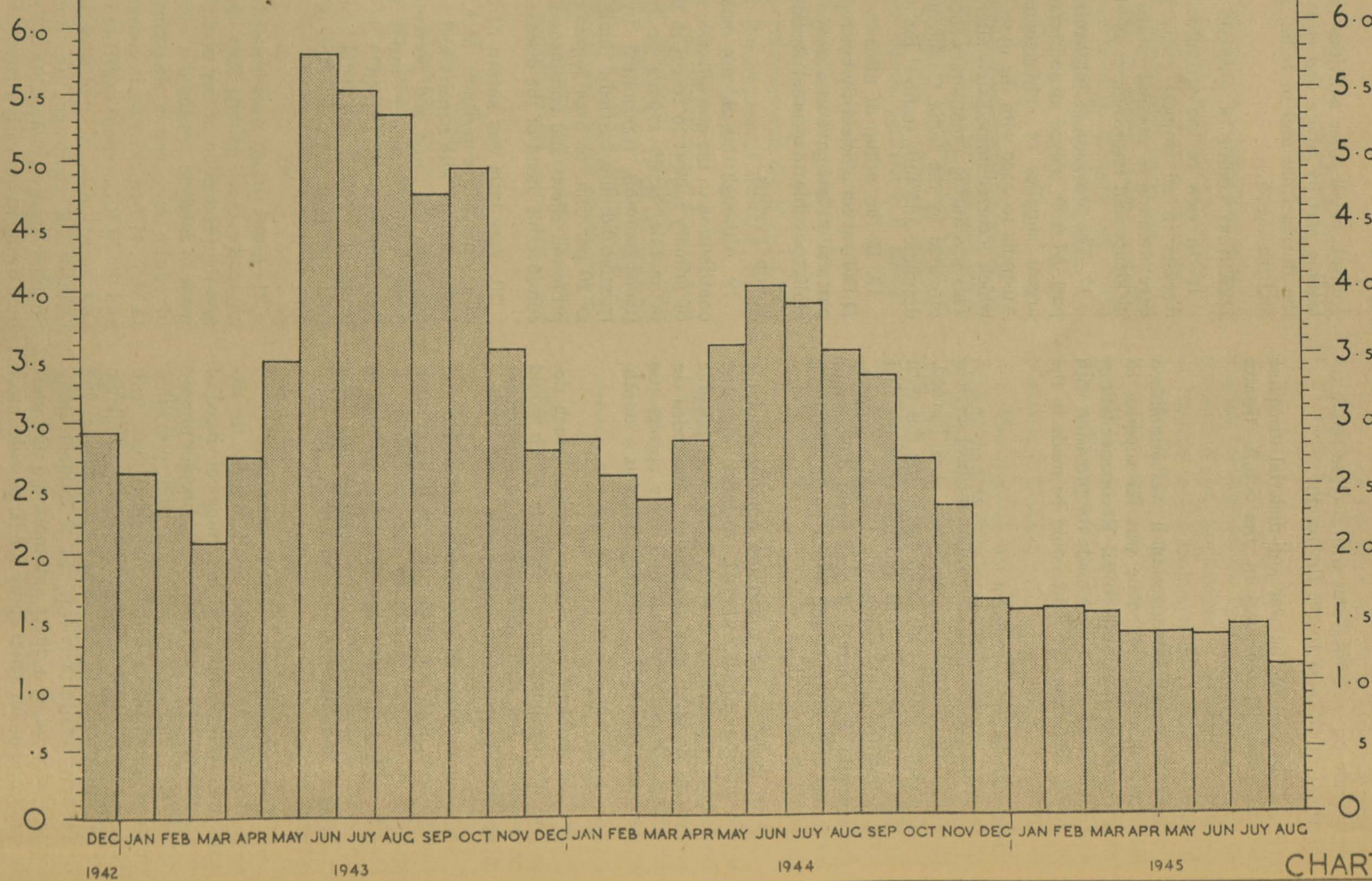
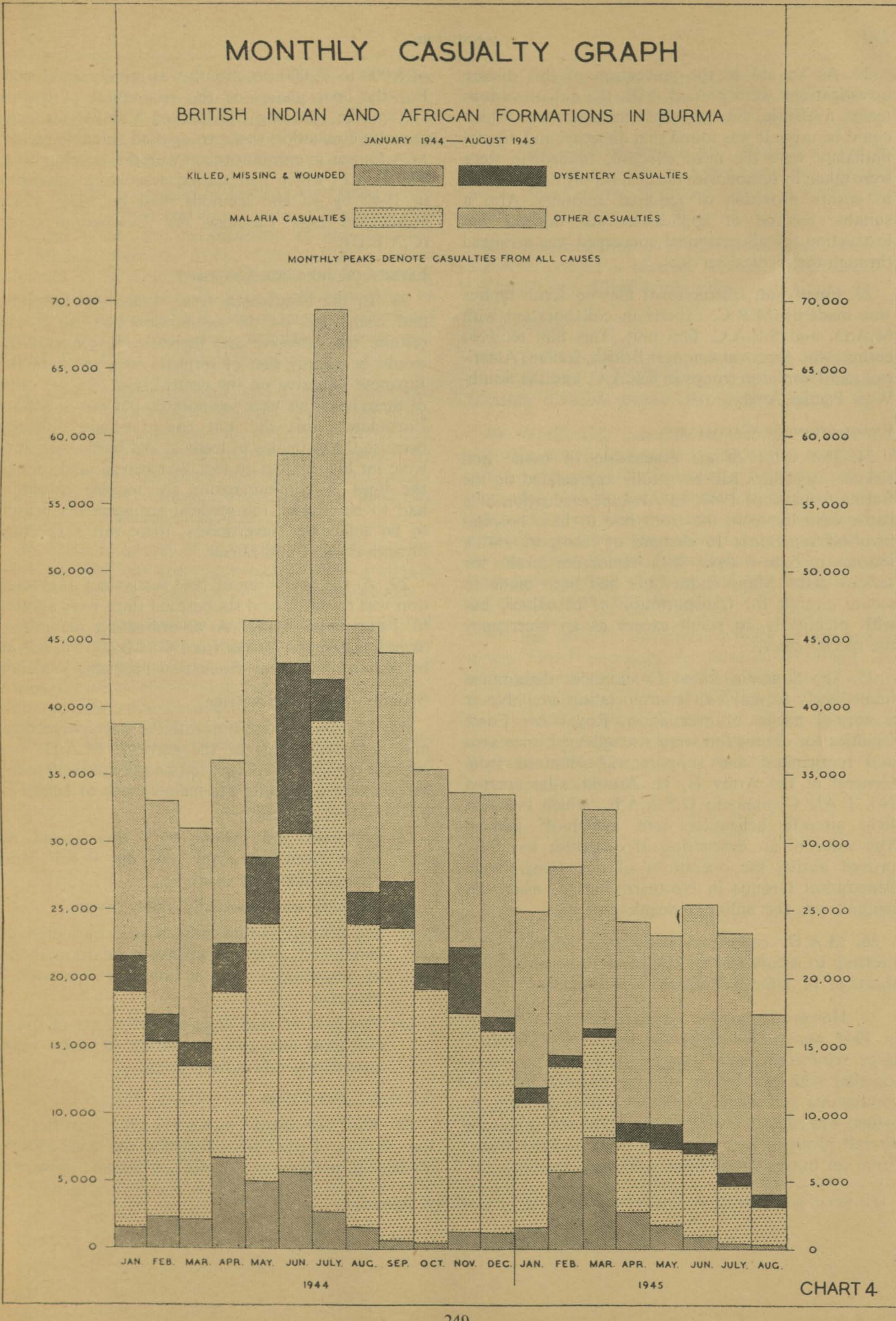



CHART 3


MONTHLY CASUALTY GRAPH
BRITISH INDIAN AND AFRICAN FORMATIONS IN BURMA
JANUARY 1944 — AUGUST 1945
KILLED, MISSING & WOUNDED
DYSENTERY CASUALTIES
MALARIA CASUALTIES
OTHER CASUALTIES
MONTHLY PEAKS DENOTE CASUALTIES FROM ALL CAUSES
70,000
65,000
60,000
55,000
50,000
45,000
40,000
35,000
30,000
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
0
JAN. FEB. MAR. APR. MAY. JUN. JULY. AUG. SEP. OCT. NOV. DEC. JAN. FEB. MAR. APR. MAY. JUN. JULY. AUG.
1944
1945
CHART 4

22. As an aid to the prevention of this disease investigations were pressed, with the aid of various teams available, into the best mite-repellent which could be used. It was found that dimethyl and dibutyl phthalate were the most effective. Immediate steps were taken by liaison with medical supply departments to ensure provision of required amounts. Also a suitable method of application was devised and instruction for all personnel concerned was arranged through the medical services.

23. Finally an instructional film on scrub typhus was made by M.R.C. experts in collaboration with M.A.D. and S.E.A.C. film unit. This film received enthusiastic approval amongst British, Indian, American and Dominion troops in S.E.A.C. and the South-West Pacific Area.

EVACUATION OF CASUALTIES

24. The value of air evacuation of battle and sickness casualties had been fully appreciated on the Burma front since 1942. In Arakan, evacuation of a battle casualty from the front line to base hospital involved sometimes 16 changes of transport and a journey of 5 to 6 days, with deplorable results for serious cases. Many endeavours had been made to secure aircraft for transportation of casualties, but with practically no result except as an emergency for special cases.

25. The Supreme Allied Commander determined immediately to make air transportation available as a normal means of evacuation. Royal Air Force facilities for evacuation were strengthened, increased and reorganised and support was obtained from General of the Army H. H. Arnold, who created No. 1 Air Commando U.S.A.A.F., which included light aircraft, helicopters and snatch-off gliders. The value of air evacuation of casualties was fully proved during the operations of our Long-Range Penetration Groups in Northern Burma, when the method was the only practicable one.

26. M.A.D. concerned itself with advising and pressing to secure further use of air evacuation, but shortage of aircraft hindered development.

27. However, when the Japanese attacks in Arakan in 1944 were followed by the isolation of Imphal, large reinforcement of the garrison was necessary together with evacuation of large numbers of non-combatants and medical units with their patients. A system was rapidly evolved whereby returning supply aircraft brought back casualties from forward areas. From an initial lift of some 2,000 per month a lift of 8,000 to 12,000 per month was rapidly developed. For the later phases of the reconquest of Burma and in the planning for that of Malaya, airborne casualty evacuation was a recognised valuable factor. M.A.D. was in constant touch with this development. The R.A.F. which had started evacuating casualties in 1942 by *ad hoc* methods, had by May, 1945, established nine Casualty Air Evacuation Units (C.A.E.U).

EFFECT OF JAPANESE OFFENSIVE

28. In the Fourteenth Army area, the hospitals had been sited on the assumption that we would resume the offensive and therefore that operations would be mainly east of Imphal. As a result of the Japanese offensive on the central front, 25 per cent. of these hospitals were temporarily put out of action. Fortunately this did not cause serious difficulty because the estimates of medical and battle casualties were far higher than, in fact, we received; and though the lines of communication for moving casualties had to be altered, the medical arrangements proved to be sufficient. Nevertheless, there was a shortage of both doctors and nurses.

29. At the beginning of 1944 the system of evacuation was reviewed and six hospital ships were allotted to Fourteenth Army. A co-ordinating committee, including representatives from G.H.Q.(I), was set up to deal with medical evacuation problems in detail.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

30. In close co-operation with the principal medical and hygiene officers of the services, M.A.D. was actively engaged in advising on and progressing many other matters affecting the maintenance of health in S.E.A.C. For example:—

(*a*) Nutrition and rations were investigated by teams from the Army and the R.A.F. and recommendations made.

(*b*) Clothing was repeatedly under review.

(*c*) Sea sickness and its control[1] was considered at length and, after many trials, standard methods of prevention were advised for operational planning.

(*d*) Problems of skin diseases and effects of over-crowding and bad ventilation in ships were considered, and advice given.

S.E.A.C. RED CROSS

31. With the steady increase in the activities of the various Red Cross Societies for and within medical formations in S.E.A.C., it became apparent

[1] This was of particular importance for Assault Troops in Combined Operations.

that some definite central co-ordination of these diverse multiple activities was necessary. In April, 1945, a directive was issued by the Supreme Allied Commander to a large representative conference of Red Cross Societies for such central co-ordination.

32. At the suggestion of Lady Louis Mountbatten a S.E.A.C. Red Cross Co-ordination Committee was founded under the chairmanship of the Director of Medical Services, H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A., Major-General T. O. Thompson, with members consisting of representatives of each of the Societies working in S.E.A.C. Eventually there were representatives of the British, Indian, Australian, Burmese, French and Dutch Red Cross on this committee.

33. Resources of personnel and materials anywhere in S.E.A.C. were pooled; S.E.A.C. Red Cross Commissioners were appointed for different regions; and a S.E.A.C. Red Cross Central Fund was opened by the generosity of the parent bodies, British and Indian Red Cross. The Australian Red Cross gave generous supplies of foods and comforts.

34. Definite quotas of personnel for medical units were arranged and stores organisation made available for provision and despatch of all required goods.

35. This reorganisation rapidly justified itself and proved to be of immense value in the final phase of the campaign, when two hundred thousand Recovered Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (R.A.P.W.I.) were fed, clothed and evacuated.

36. At the beginning of this final stage over 75,000 gift parcels were prepared in India and delivered by air-drop to the A.P.W.I. camps as these were located. Ten thousand tons of stores and foodstuffs were made available. Nearly 500 workers were engaged at the bases, in hospitals and numerous camps.

37. The work of the S.E.A.C. Red Cross and the personnel of all the Societies received thankful praise from many thousands of R.A.P.W.I. and battle and sickness casualties.

38. The formation of a Combined Red Cross for S.E.A.C. proved a success, and it is recommended for any future Allied combined services command.

CONCLUSION

39. The existence of an inter-Allied inter-service expert body of experienced senior officers in a medical advisory division proved extremely valuable.

40. World-wide liaison with medical services and scientific bodies was made possible; the attention of our own medical services could be drawn to new methods or advantageous materials, and early steps taken for their adoption and provision. Close co-operation between the medical departments of the various services and formations can be achieved, leading to greater efficiency and less duplication of effort and waste of material.

41. But even in an advisory body of this nature it was found necessary to have a chairman and later a director, on whom rested the responsibility for initiative, evaluation of investigations and direct liaison with the principal medical officers of services and medical departments elsewhere. For any future Supreme Allied Command a medical division of this type is recommended.

# ANNEXURE 6

## Engineer Organisation in S.E.A.C.

### Engineer Responsibilities and Tasks

1. The Engineer-in-Chief, S.E.A.C., was responsible for Engineer co-ordination as part of the overall administrative control exercised by the Principal Administrative Officer. The Engineer staff was from the start completely integrated, inter-Allied and inter-service. It contained two main sections, one dealing with Engineer Intelligence and operational planning, the other dealing with Works and Engineer Stores.

2. The Engineer task in the campaign was to open up a completely undeveloped country, devoid of all modern Engineer resources, over some of the worst terrain in the world. It was complicated by different geological conditions and by a monsoon climate which produced the most severe test that could be made of Engineer work. Many problems were unparalleled in previous Engineer experience, and would in peace conditions have been rejected as too difficult.

### Works for The Royal Navy

3. In Ceylon there was constructed the main base for the Eastern (later East Indies) Fleet. This included over 3 million square feet of covered storage, a quantity of shore accommodation, three naval airfields excluding China Bay, a graving dock (unfinished) in Colombo and a number of harbour works in Trincomalee. The work was under the technical supervision of the Assistant Civil Engineer-in-Chief, Admiralty Works Department, Eastern Theatre, but much of the work was carried out by Army units.

### Roads

4. Some 2,400 miles of all-weather road were built, a distance as far as from Lisbon to Leningrad. The terrain was singularly unsuited for road construction, varying from the Arakan swamps with an average of more than one bridge per mile of road, excluding culverts, to the Chin Hills—so steep that it was at times impossible to cut a two-way road on the side slopes and two one-way roads had to be built instead.

5. British work included the Assam trunk road from North Salmara to Makum[1]; the 200 miles of two-way all-weather road over the mountains from Dimapur through Imphal to Tamu which carried more than 2,000 tons a day throughout the monsoon; the 184 miles through tangled hills from Imphal through Tiddim to Fort White; the 90 miles of two-way all-weather road down the Kabaw Valley from Tamu to Kalewa which were built in 135 days; and many other roads. The American Engineers with the help of over 14 million man-days of British labour built the great road on General Stilwell's front from Ledo to Myitkyina, 171 miles, and on through Bhamo to its junction with the old Burma Road.

### Airfields

6. In S.E.A.C. 407 airfields were constructed in all, of which 95 were all-weather fields and 312 fair-weather strips. Over 180 miles of paved runway were built, together with parking aprons, hard standings and taxi tracks of about the same overall area. This is the equivalent of a two-way all-weather road from Paris to Moscow.

7. The "Hump" airfields in Assam aggregated some 20 miles of runway, 130 miles of road and taxi track, over 500 hard standings for transport aircraft, accommodation for 30,000 men and three million square feet (68 acres) of covered storage.

### River Work

8. Over 1,300 military bridges were built by British and American Engineers, an aggregate of over 20 miles of bridge. They included the American barge bridge over the Irrawaddy at Myitkyina; the British-Indian Bailey bridge over the Chindwin at Kalewa, 1,154 feet long, built in 28 working hours; and a 4,000-foot American Bailey suspension bridge over the Sheweli River. Special mention must be made of the piled causeway built by American Engineers in the Hukawng Valley, over a mile long and averaging 12 feet above ground level.

### Accommodation

9. Firm figures for the total amount of monsoon accommodation built are not available, nor is it likely that they will ever be complete. Covered storage aggregated over 700 acres, hospitals were built and housed over 9,000 beds, and over a million men were housed. All this accommodation was provided with water supply, and essential buildings with electric light to the extent of available plant, which was far too short. Cold storage was constructed to hold over 3,000 tons, and ice plants to produce over 70 tons per day.

### Oil Pipe-Lines

10. The oil pipe-lines built were a feature of the campaign.[2] The American Engineers built some 1,400

[1] North Salmara is between Bongaigaon and Jojighopa; Makum between Tinsukia and Ledo (see Map 2, preceding page 1).

[2] See Map 4 (preceding page 1).

miles of six-inch pipe from Calcutta to Tinsukia, and as much again of four-inch pipe stretching right through to Kunming in China. In the British area Indian Engineers laid just over 900 miles of pipe with connected storage and distribution. A ship-to-shore pipe-line was put in from a deep sea anchorage west of Chittagong.

BASE WORK

11. A typical example of base development is the case of Akyab, where the one peace-time jetty was found to be badly damaged and two ships sunk alongside. Extensive repairs were carried out after removal of the ships, and at the same time a new 600-foot timber jetty was built and several pontoon jetties erected. An average daily discharge of 1,300 tons was reached, the best day giving 2,450 tons, excluding bulk petrol. On shore an all-weather airfield was built to accommodate three squadrons of transport aircraft *plus* tactical squadrons. The necessary covered storage and access roads to handle the air-supply load had to be built; air-supply aggregated 11,792 tons from this airfield alone in April 1945. In addition, accommodation for the monsoon garrison, a reinforcement reception camp, a hospital and bulk oil storage for 1,470,000 gallons were built.

SURVEY

12. Maps of most of the area of operations were sketchy in detail and of doubtful accuracy at the start of the campaign. Much ground and air survey had therefore to be carried out before the new maps could be produced. During the first three months of 1945 two and a half million maps were delivered to forward formations by air. The system of Chart-Maps, initiated by the Chief of Combined Operations in 1942, was developed to a very high standard in the Inter-Service Survey Department in Kandy.

ENGINEER STORES

13. The volume of Engineer work carried out resulted in and was reflected by an enormous consumption of Engineer stores. Excluding local material, such as stone and timber, the consumption averaged over 60,000 tons per month, covering a range of nearly 12,000 items. During the Mandalay-Meiktila battle 20,000 tons of Engineer stores were flown in.

PLANT

14. Engineer plant of all types and especially earth-moving equipment was never in adequate supply as far as the British forces were concerned (in marked contrast to the supply for the American forces). Only some 500 items of earth-moving plant were available to them, with an inadequate supply of essential spares. Their fullest performance during the winter of 1944-45 was essential to the success of the campaign. During this period it is computed that the earth shifted by machines was the equivalent of a foot layer of earth off a ten-foot wide road over 2,000 miles long.

PERSONNEL

15. The final indication of the volume of Engineer work is the strength of skilled and unskilled labour employed on it. Over 75,000 British, Indian, East African, West African and Ceylonese Engineers were continuously employed, and over 200,000 unskilled labourers were under their direction. Some 21,000 American Engineer troops were employed at peak strength, apart from 4,200 railway troops on the Bengal and Assam Railway.

# ANNEXURE 7

## Psychological Warfare

1. At the time of the formation of the South-East Asia Command, control of Psychological, or Political, warfare in the Far East was vested, on the British side, in the Far Eastern Bureau (F.E.B.) which had been set up in Hong Kong in September, 1939, had moved to Singapore early in 1940, and had since the fall of Singapore been established in New Delhi. The F.E.B. received directives from the Political Warfare (Japan) Committee (P.W.(J.)C.)[1], and functioned, so far as operational matters were concerned, through the P.W. Division of G.H.Q. (I), Force 136, and Civil Affairs.

2. As a result of discussions in London, while the Command was being formed, between the Supreme Allied Commander, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Information, a P.W. Division was set up in S.E.A.C., under Group-Captain C. C. Bell, R.A.A.F., and the division's first task was to establish relations with the already existing organisations. Co-ordination with G.H.Q. (I), Force 136, and Civil Affairs was effected by attaching their respective P.W. sections, wholly or in part, to P.W. Division. It had been agreed that direction would be supplied by the P.W.(J.)C., through the Chief Political Adviser, S.E.A.C.; and directives were consequently supplied concurrently to Mr. Dening, and to the Director-General, F.E.B.

3. Between February and July, 1944, the operational propaganda activities of the British organisations mentioned above were: the operations of five front-line propaganda parties—Indian Field Broadcasting Units (I.F.B.Us.) raised by Force 136; the printing and distribution by air of propaganda leaflets and Burmese, Japanese and Indian weekly news-sheets; and broadcasts in all languages of the South-East Asia theatre conducted by the F.E.B. from Delhi.

4. The I.F.B.Us. were units of approximately platoon strength, equipped for the dual role of conducting "propaganda" patrols in order to win over the inhabitants of disputed areas, and of attacking static Japanese positions by means of loud-speakers and leaflet bombs discharged from two-inch mortars.

5. Leaflets and news-sheets dropped during this period were confined to Japanese, Burmese and Hindustani, and the target was the battle area and lines of communication in Burma. Broadcasting was carried out entirely by F.E.B. at Delhi, and consisted of two hours a day in Japanese, with programmes of approximately half that length in Burmese, Malay, Siamese and three Chinese dialects.

6. The propaganda themes driven home to the Japanese were: the implication for Japan of Germany's impending defeat; shortages of food and equipment in the Japanese Army; and the incompetence of the Japanese High Command. In addition a prolonged attempt was made to break down the Japanese refusal to surrender, and throughout the campaign "surrender passes" guaranteeing fair treatment to those who were captured were distributed, mainly by mortar.

7. Propaganda to the Burmese at first continued the themes that Japan was exploiting Burma, and tried to build up hatred against the Japanese. Later, however, after the failure of the Japanese attack on Imphal, it was found that Burmese hatred of the Japanese could be taken for granted, and propaganda concentrated on rubbing in the fact of the Japanese defeat and conveying instructions to the local population.

8. Hindustani propaganda was addressed almost entirely to the Indian National Army which proved a most receptive target. The first task was to dispel the carefully-inspired Japanese legend that all I.N.A. personnel captured by the British would be shot.

9. Propaganda in enemy territory throughout the campaign was all in close support of either front-line propaganda or resistance movements organised by the guerrillas.

10. During the period from August, 1944 to May, 1945, the dropping of leaflets and news-sheets printed at the forward base at Calcutta increased steadily, reaching six and a half million in December, 1944, 11 million in January, 1945, and over 20 million at the height of the Burma campaign in March.

11. Broadcasting continued as before and in September, 1944, the S.E.A.C. Headquarters radio

[1] In so far as Japan was concerned, the P.W.(J.)C.—which was inter-departmental and sat in London—worked within the framework of an agreed Anglo-American plan for political warfare against Japan; for occupied territories its directives were British, being supplied by the Foreign Office, Burma Office, and Colonial Office, each of which was represented on the Committee.

station (Radio SEAC) began to operate from Colombo. The I.F.B.Us. were fully employed in loudspeaker and leaflet mortar propaganda, particularly during the crossing of the Chindwin and the battle for Mandalay.

12. By January, 1945, it was clear that many of the Japanese troops recognised themselves as a defeated force, and two new themes were introduced to the surrender campaign. Increasingly frequent allusions were made to the future of a post-war non-militarist Japan, and the duty of the soldier, whose position was hopeless, to live rather than to die for his country; and, as our military superiority became more apparent, a series of leaflets was dropped, the theme of which was "What do you know of us?" The purpose of these was to emphasise the spiritual as well as material strength of the Allies, and to assure the Japanese that good treatment of prisoners was part of our military code, equivalent but superior to their "Bushido".

13. The early months of this period saw the completion of a most successful leaflet campaign against the I.N.A., the bulk of whose units in Burma surrendered in Upper Burma. Fourteenth Army reported in September that three out of every four I.N.A. soldiers surrendering stated that leaflets had induced them to do so.

14. Early in 1945, control of F.E.B.[1] was transferred from the Ministry of Information to the Political Warfare Executive (P.W.E.), an organisation under the joint control of the Minister of Information and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; and directives for psychological warfare in S.E.A.C. were now issued by P.W.E. instead of by the P.W.(J.)C. The Supreme Allied Commander invited the Director-General of P.W.E. to nominate an officer to co-ordinate all P.W. activities within S.E.A.C. In April, Brigadier C. R. Major was sent out to do this; and after VJ-Day was relieved by Mr. John Rayner, who dealt with the grave P.W. problems of the post-surrender period. On the American side, control continued to be exercised by the Office of War Information (O.W.I.) and the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), which retained the completely separate identity which had always existed. Direction of O.W.I. policy was effected through a Joint Anglo-American Liaison Committee; and O.S.S. operations were cleared through "P" Division of H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A., which co-ordinated all Allied Intelligence activities in enemy-occupied territory.

15. After the fall of Rangoon the scale of psychological warfare in Burma naturally decreased. The lack of targets combined with the monsoon to reduce considerably the number of leaflets dropped, although an intensive campaign was carried out against the Japanese trapped in the Pegu Yomas.

16. In this period the main effort of P.W. Division was turned to Malaya and Siam. Leaflet dropping figures in these countries, however, never reached the figures for Burma, since at no time during the campaign was it possible to secure aircraft specifically allotted to leaflet operations, and distances were too great for wide cover through normal channels.

17. Both to the Japanese and the local inhabitants the mainstay of our propaganda in this period was the factual news. To local inhabitants this was presented in a most conservative fashion, since it was known that optimistic rumours circulated and it was essential to do nothing that might give rise to a premature revolt in Malaya or Siam.

18. With the Japanese surrender, P.W. Division was faced with four immediate tasks: to provide the means of communication with the Japanese Headquarters at Saigon; to inform all local populations of the surrender and warn them against taking reprisals; to ensure that all Japanese units received news of the surrender; and to ensure that all Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (A.P.W.I.) were informed of the surrender and the relief measures which were being undertaken.

19. Few things are more difficult to gauge than the effects of psychological warfare; but it seems indisputable that this must have played a major part in:—

(*a*) The dissipation of the Japanese belief that surrender was unthinkable, or that prisoners were ill-treated; and a rise in the proportion of surrenders to killed among Japanese troops from 0.6 per cent. in the first three months of 1944 to 12.5 per cent. in June/July, 1945, with an equally significant rise in the proportion of voluntary surrenders.

(*b*) The surrender of the vast majority of I.N.A. troops who found themselves in a position to do so.

(*c*) The fact that the Burmese people who were already turning against the Japanese were confirmed in this view, and supplied with true news in a regular and widely distributed form.

(*d*) The fact that the other peoples of South-East Asia were kept in touch with the essential facts of the true news and the Allied outlook.

[1] Full integration of F.E.B. and P.W. Division was not achieved, however, until after the Japanese surrender, when the new organisation became known as Far Eastern Publicity (F.E.P.)

# ANNEXURE 8

## Public Relations and Service Relations

I. Public Relations and Information (P.R.I.) and Film and Photographic Services in S.E.A.C.

*Objects*

1. The S.E.A.C. Public Relations and Information Service had three main functions: firstly, to keep war correspondents fully informed (so far as permissible) of the Supreme Allied Commander's policies and all operational news; secondly, to provide maintenance, accommodation, transport and communications for war correspondents; and thirdly, to provide news and feature articles concerning the armed forces written by P.R. personnel.

2. The Film and Photographic units were responsible for the film and photographic coverage of the armed forces. Some of the most remarkable combat pictures, which were taken by the units, under Colonel Irving Ascher, U.S. Army, were used in that fine documentary film " Burma Victory ".

*Functions*

3. P.R.I. operating with land forces in the field was organised on a corps basis. Unlike Europe it was found more practicable, owing to the great distances separating Corps areas in S.E.A.C., to maintain a P.R.I. service under the command of a Deputy Assistant Director of Public Relations with each Corps. Air Information maintained sections at all Group Headquarters in the operational area.

4. News, features, film and photo coverage of the R.N. and R.A.F. were provided by the information officers of those services. Similar coverage of Allied land forces was provided by Army P.R. personnel, who were responsible also for providing facilities for war correspondents.

*Communications*

5. Until early 1944 there was no special provision for the handling of Press traffic in South-East Asia, nor in fact could existing resources of men or equipment have permitted this. Press correspondents were few, publicity existed on a very limited scale, and Army signals were relied on for Press communications.

6. With the formation of S.E.A.C. it was decided to open up a high-speed wireless station at Comilla, where Fourteenth Army Headquarters was to be located when it moved from Barrackpore. The Comilla Press station operated by the Indian Radio Cable Company was in operation by August, 1944, and a considerable amount of copy was cleared to the main network at Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay.

7. As the Burma war opened up, mobile wireless stations were required forward with Army and Corps Headquarters as they advanced. The War Office arranged with Cable and Wireless, Ltd., to put into the field civilian detachments to man Army equipment. They were known as Telecom detachments and retained their international status as civilians. They operated direct to the Cable and Wireless main station in Ceylon, whence traffic was transmitted back to London over the existing world network.

8. A Press ship was provided for Press communications in the later stages of the campaign, which were to have been a series of amphibious operations. Landing Craft, Infantry (Large) (L.C.I.(L.)) 104 was equipped as a complete short-wave wireless station capable of dealing with high-speed automatic telegraph signals, voice-casts and pictures. The ship was converted in Colombo at the direction of the Supreme Allied Commander.

II. Service Relations

*Objects*

9. The directorate of Service Relations was organised to fulfil three main functions:—

(*a*) To provide the services in S.E.A.C. with up-to-date publications and magazines;

(*b*) In liaison with the Directorate of Services Kinematography, to supply the services in S.E.A.C. with adequate film entertainment;

(*c*) To provide the services in S.E.A.C. with an efficient broadcasting service, incorporating both entertainment and news.

*Publications*

10. In January, 1944, Lieut.-Colonel (then Lieut.) Frank Owen started the publication of the daily newspaper "*SEAC*", the first completely inter-service newspaper to be published in any Command. The original editorial staff comprised an Army and a Royal Marine subaltern and a few other ranks and ratings, drawn from the three services. The paper was printed in Calcutta by courtesy of "*The Statesman*" newspaper. It immediately became very popular with the services, and was unquestionably a great morale-builder throughout the S.E.A.C. campaign. In a very short

time its circulation rose from 10,000 to 100,000 copies per day. Throughout the campaign certain formations and units were supplied with "*SEAC*" by air-drop and in most cases it arrived regularly—daily.

11. "*Phoenix*" Magazine was first published in February, 1945. This was a weekly magazine to provide both American and British forces in S.E.A.C. with a pictorial which would be of interest to all, and foster good Anglo-American relations in S.E.A.C. The publication was jointly edited by an officer of the Royal Marines and an officer of the U.S. Army. The weekly circulation was around 30,000.

12. In December, 1944, "*SEAC Souvenir*", a magazine designed to give a complete history of the campaign up to that date, was published. Half a million copies were printed in Calcutta, and an additional 350,000 copies were produced for sale in the United Kingdom. In 1945, a second "*SEAC Souvenir*" was published. "*Laugh With SEAC*"—a booklet incorporating most of the cartoons and drawings which had appeared in "*SEAC*" newspaper—was published. 40,000 copies were sold. Booklets giving Corps and divisional histories were also published from time to time.

*Films*

13. This Directorate was made responsible for the provision of films and equipment to the services in India and S.E.A.C. In the early stages of the campaign it was only possible for the average unit to see one film a month, but as more equipment became available increased showings were made to the services and late in 1945 it was possible for all ranks to see one film every week. The attendance figure for March, 1946, at all mobile and static shows in S.E.A.C. attained the record figure of 2,300,000.

*Broadcasting*

14. In 1945, a 7·5 kW. transmitter was obtained and Radio Unit S.E.A.C. was organised. This unit was able to provide broadcast entertainment and news to the services in S.E.A.C. for nine hours per day. This service became increasingly popular, and by December, 1945, the staff of "Radio SEAC" were receiving an average of 1,800 letters a week.

15. In November, 1944, as a result of discussions, a decision was taken by the War Office to erect a 100 kW. transmitter in Ceylon, with an aerial array designed to cover India and the Far East. Shipping difficulties and lack of equipment created a great delay in the completion of this project, but eventually the entire work was completed, and the station (which then became known as "Radio SEAC") commenced testing in April, 1946. This broadcast station, which is one of the most powerful in the British Commonwealth, opened its broadcast service on the 1st May with a scheduled broadcasting time of 17 hours per day, and continued under this name after the South-East Asia Command was wound-up.

# ANNEXURE 9

## SENIOR OFFICERS OF S.E.A.C.

1. Senior Officers of H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A.
2. Senior Officers of Naval Forces in S.E.A.C.
3. Senior Officers of Land Forces in S.E.A.C.
4. Senior Officers of Air Forces in S.E.A.C.

NOTES. (*a*) Although the Supreme Allied Commander and some of his staff were nominated several weeks before the date on which S.E.A.C. became an operational Command, the earliest date given for any appointment in this annexure is this date, *viz*: 16th November 1943.

(*b*) When a unit arrived in S.E.A.C. after the appointment of an officer the date shown is the date of arrival in S.E.A.C.

(*c*) Officers are shown in the rank they held on the dates indicated; consequently cases will be found of the same officer appearing in different places in these lists in different ranks.

### 1. SENIOR OFFICERS OF H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A.

*Supreme Allied Commander*

| | |
|---|---|
| Admiral (Hon. Lieut.-General and Hon. Air Marshal) the Lord Louis Mountbatten,[1] G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C. | 16 Nov. 43—31 May 46 |

*Deputy Supreme Allied Commander*

| | |
|---|---|
| General J. W. Stilwell (U.S. Army) | 16 Nov. 43—21 Oct. 44 |
| Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler (U.S. Army) | 12 Nov. 44— 4 Oct. 45[2] |

*Prime Minister's and Supreme Allied Commander's Representative with Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek*

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieut.-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, V.C., K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—31 May 46 |

*Prime Minister's and Supreme Allied Commander's Representative with General MacArthur*

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieut.-General C. H. Gairdner, C.B., C.B.E. | 16 Mar. 45—31 May 46 |

*Supreme Allied Commander's Representative in Delhi and Commander Rear H.Q., S.A.C.S.E.A.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General Sir Charles Lane, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.B.E., M.C. | 1 Aug. 44—31 May 46 |

*Chief of Staff*

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieut.-General Sir Henry Pownall, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43—26 Dec. 44 |
| Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Browning, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. | 26 Dec. 44—12 July 46 |

*Deputy Chief of Staff*

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General A. C. Wedemeyer (U.S. Army) | 16 Nov. 43—27 Aug. 44 |
| Maj.-General H. H. Fuller (U.S. Army) | 27 Sept. 44—10 Aug. 45 |
| Rear-Admiral C. E. Douglas-Pennant, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., D.S.C. | 10 Aug. 45— 1 May 46 |

*Deputy Chief of Staff (Information and Civil Affairs)*[3]

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté, K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O. | 23 Nov. 43— 8 June 45 |

[1] Created Viscount Mountbatten of Burma in June, 1946, and Earl Mountbatten of Burma a year later.
[2] Appointment lapsed.
[3] After 8th June 1945 the functions of D.C.O.S. (I and C.A.) were divided into those of a Director of Civil Affairs (Brigadier E. J. Gibbons, M.B.E.) an Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (Information) (Brigadier J. S. M. Wardell, M.B.E.) and a Director of Psychological Warfare (Brigadier C. R. Major).

| | |
|---|---|
| *Principal Administrative Officer* | |
| Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—23 Sept. 45 |
| Maj.-General Sir Reginald Denning, K.B.E., C.B. ... ... ... ... | 23 Sept. 45—31 May 46 |
| *Deputy Principal Administrative Officer* | |
| Maj.-General Charles Lane, C.B., C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 1 Aug. 44 |
| Maj.-General Reginald Denning, C.B. ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Aug. 44—23 Sept. 45 |
| *Assistant Chief of Staff* | |
| Maj.-General G. E. Wildman-Lushington, C.B.E., Royal Marines ... | 18 Jan. 44— 7 April 45 |
| Maj.-General B. C. H. Kimmins, C.B., C.B.E. ... ... ... ... | 7 April 45—31 May 46 |
| *Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (Air)* | |
| Air Vice-Marshal J. Whitworth-Jones, C.B., C.B.E. ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—28 April 45 |
| Air Vice-Marshal G. E. Gibbs, C.B.E., M.C. ... ... ... ... | 28 April 45—24 April 46[1] |
| *Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff (Naval)*[2] | |
| Commodore (1st Class) G. M. B. Langley, O.B.E.... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 6 Nov. 44 |
| Rear-Admiral C. E. Douglas-Pennant, C.B.E., D.S.O., D.S.C. ... ... | 6 Nov. 44—28 Aug. 45 |
| *Director of Intelligence*[3] | |
| Maj.-General C. R. W. Lamplough, C.B.E., D.S.C., Royal Marines ... | 7 Dec. 43—16 May 45 |
| Maj.-General W. R. C. Penney, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... | 16 May 45—28 Nov. 45 |
| Air Vice-Marshal L. F. Pendred, M.B.E., D.F.C. ... ... ... ... | 28 Nov. 45—31 May 46 |
| *Head of " P " Division* | |
| Captain G. A. Garnons-Williams, D.S.O., D.S.C., R.N. ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—29 April 46 |
| *Director of Medical Services*[4] | |
| Maj.-General T. O. Thompson, C.B., C.B.E., M.D.... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 1 Mar. 44<br>7 April 45— 9 Mar. 46[1] |
| *Chief Political Adviser* | |
| Mr. M. E. Dening, C.M.G., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 1 April 46 |
| *Financial Adviser* | |
| Sir Archibald Rowlands, K.C.B., M.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—12 Jan. 45 |
| Mr. E. H. Everson ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 12 Jan. 45—31 May 46 |
| *Head of Operations Division* | |
| Brig.-General F. G. Brink (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... | 10 July 44—10 July 45 |
| *Head of Combined Operations* | |
| Maj.-General M. W. M. MacLeod, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—18 May. 44 |
| Brigadier D. W. Price, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 18 May 44—14 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier B. W. Leicester, D.S.O., Royal Marines... ... ... ... | 14 Mar. 45—30 Dec. 45[1] |
| *Head of Airborne Operations* | |
| Brigadier A. G. Walch, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Feb. 45—30 Oct. 45[1] |
| *Engineer-in-Chief* | |
| Maj.-General D. Harrison, C.B., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—15 Mar. 46[1] |

[1] Appointment lapsed.
[2] After 28th August 1945 the appointment of A.D.C.O.S.(N.) lapsed, and A.D.C.O.S.(A.) (A.V.M. G. E. Gibbs) became simply Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff.
[3] The Directors of Intelligence were—by special request of the Supreme Allied Commander—appointed successively by the Admiralty, the War Office and the Air Ministry.
[4] Major-General Thompson served as D.M.S., 11 Army Group (and later A.L.F.S.E.A.) from March 1944 to April 1945.

*Signal Officer-in-Chief*

| | |
|---|---|
| Captain M. Hodges, R.N. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 6 Oct. 44 |
| Captain C. F. W. St. Quintin, R.N. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 6 Oct. 44—31 May 46 |

*Deputy Signal Officer-in-Chief*

| | |
|---|---|
| Colonel H. W. Grant (U.S. Army Air Force) ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—15 Nov. 44 |
| Captain W. E. Linaweaver (U.S. Navy) ... ... ... ... ... | 15 Nov. 44—29 Jan. 45 |
| Captain S. F. Habecker (U.S. Navy) ... ... ... ... ... | 29 Jan. 45— 1 Dec. 45 |
| Colonel E. I. E. Mozley ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Dec. 45—31 May 46 |

*Senior American War Staff Officers*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brig.-General R. T. Maddocks (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—12 Nov. 44 |
| Brig.-General E. H. Beebe (U.S. Army Air Force) ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—19 Aug. 44 |
| Brig.-General G. Shulgen (U.S. Army Air Force) ... ... ... | 19 Aug. 43—12 July 45 |
| Commodore B. J. Rogers (U.S. Navy) ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—19 Mar. 44 |
| Colonel A. T. Mason (U.S. Marine Corps) ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—28 May 44 |

*Head of U.S. Commanding General's Liaison Staff*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brig.-General F. D. Merrill (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 3 Jan. 44 |
| Brig.-General T. S. Timberman (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... | 3 Jan. 44—20 May 44 |
| Brig.-General F. D. Merrill (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 20 May 44—14 Aug. 44 |
| Brig.-General T. F. Wessells (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... ... | 14 Aug. 44— 3 Dec. 44 |
| Brig.-General T. S. Timberman (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... | 3 Dec. 44—18 Sept. 45 |

*Comptroller of Headquarters*

| | |
|---|---|
| Rear-Admiral (S) Sir Rowland Jerram, K.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 3 Jan. 45[1] |

*Allied Missions attached to H.Q. S.A.C.S.E.A.*

*Head of Netherlands Military Mission*

| | |
|---|---|
| Colonel (later Maj.-General) D. C. Buurman van Vreeden ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—25 Mar. 46 |

*Head of Chinese Military Mission*

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General Feng Yee ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43 |

*Head of French Military Mission and Commander of the French Forces in the Far East*

| | |
|---|---|
| Général de Corps d'Armée R. C. A. H. Blaizot ... ... ... ... ... | 3 Oct. 44—18 Aug. 45 |
| Général de Corps d'Armée P. F. M. Leclerc ... ... ... ... | 18 Aug. 45—31 May 46 |

*H.E. The Commander-in-Chief, Ceylon*

| | |
|---|---|
| Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O. ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 8 Jan. 45 |
| Lieut.-General Sir Edward Wetherall, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... | 8 Jan. 45— 8 Jan. 46[1] |

## 2. Senior Officers of Naval Forces in S.E.A.C.

*C.-in-C., Eastern Fleet*

| | |
|---|---|
| Admiral Sir James Somerville, G.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—22 Aug. 44 |
| Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser[2], G.C.B., K.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... | 23 Aug. 44—21 Nov. 44 |

*C.-in-C., East Indies Fleet*

| | |
|---|---|
| Admiral Sir Arthur Power, K.C.B., C.V.O. ... ... ... ... ... | 22 Nov. 44—14 Dec. 45 |
| Vice-Admiral Sir Clement Moody, K.C.B. ... ... ... ... ... | 15 Dec. 45— 8 Mar. 46 |
| Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Palliser, K.C.B., D.S.C. ... ... ... ... | 9 Mar. 46—31 May 46 |

[1] Appointment lapsed.

[2] Created Lord Fraser of North Cape in January, 1946.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Deputy C.-in-C., Eastern Fleet*[2] | |
| Vice-Admiral V. H. Danckwerts, C.M.G. | 16 Nov. 43— 1 Mar. 44 |
| Rear-Admiral R. S. G. Nicholson, D.S.O., D.S.C. | 6 April 44—21 Nov. 44 |
| *Deputy C.-in-C., East Indies Fleet*[2] | |
| Rear-Admiral R. S. G. Nicholson, D.S.O., D.S.C. | 22 Nov. 44—19 Sept. 45 |
| *Deputy Naval Commander, S.E.A.C.* | |
| Vice-Admiral G. J. A. Miles, C.B. | 16 Nov. 43—29 April 44 |
| *C.-in-C. Netherlands Naval Forces* | |
| Vice-Admiral C. E. L. Helfrich | 16 Nov. 43—11 Feb. 46 |
| *Vice-Admiral Commanding 1st Battle Squadron and 2nd in Command, Eastern Fleet* | |
| Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Power, K.C.B., C.V.O. | 1 Dec. 43—21 Nov. 44 |
| *Vice-Admiral Commanding 3rd Battle Squadron and 2nd in Command, East Indies Fleet* | |
| Vice-Admiral H. T. C. Walker, C.B. | 4 Dec. 44—17 Nov. 45 |
| *Rear-Admiral Commanding 4th Cruiser Squadron* | |
| Rear-Admiral A. D. Read, C.B. | 16 Nov. 43—30 Nov. 44 |
| *Rear-Admiral Commanding 5th Cruiser Squadron* | |
| Rear-Admiral H. T. C. Walker, C.B. | 3 June 44— 3 Dec. 44 |
| Rear-Admiral A. D. Read, C.B. | 8 Jan. 45— 9 Mar. 45 |
| Vice-Admiral W. R. Patterson, C.B., C.V.O. | 10 Mar. 45—31 May 46 |
| *Flag Officer Commanding 11th Aircraft Carrier Squadron* | |
| Rear-Admiral C. H. J. Harcourt, C.B., C.B.E. | 8 June 45— 7 July 45 |
| *Rear-Admiral Commanding 21st Aircraft Carrier Squadron* | |
| Rear-Admiral G. N. Oliver, C.B., D.S.O. | 23 Feb. 45—31 Oct. 45 |
| *Rear-Admiral (Aircraft Carriers) Eastern Fleet* | |
| Rear-Admiral C. Moody, C.B. | 1 Dec. 43— 9 Nov. 44 |
| *Flag Officer Commanding Fleet Aircraft Carriers* | |
| Rear-Admiral Sir Philip Vian, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O. | 15 Nov. 44—29 Jan. 45 |
| *Flag Officer (Air) East Indies Fleet*[3] | |
| Vice-Admiral C. Moody, C.B. | 10 Nov. 44—14 Dec. 45 |
| *Flag Officer Commanding Aircraft Carriers and Naval Air Stations East Indies Station* | |
| Rear-Admiral A. R. M. Bridge, C.B.E. | 15 Dec. 45—31 May 46 |
| *Rear-Admiral (Naval Air Stations) Indian Ocean* | |
| Rear-Admiral H. C. Rawlings, C.B., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43— 9 Dec. 44[1] |
| *Rear-Admiral (Q) on Staff of C.-in-C., Eastern Fleet* | |
| Rear-Admiral C. S. Holland | 27 Nov. 43—21 Nov. 44 |

[1] Appointment lapsed.
[2] Rear-Admiral Nicholson was Deputy C.-in-C. Eastern Fleet (and later Deputy C.-in-C. East Indies Fleet) and Flag Officer Ceylon.
[3] The first twelve days of this appointment were technically " Flag Officer (Air) Eastern Fleet."

*Rear-Admiral (Q) on Staff of C.-in-C., East Indies Fleet*

Rear-Admiral C. S. Holland, C.B. ... ... ... ... ... ... 22 Nov. 44— 4 Aug. 45
Rear-Admiral H. Hickling, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 5 Aug. 45—19 April 46

*Flag Officer Ceylon*[1]

Rear-Admiral R. S. G. Nicholson, D.S.O., D.S.C. ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—19 Sept. 45
Rear-Admiral J. M. Mansfield, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C. ... ... ... 20 Sept. 45—31 May 46

*Flag Officer Malaya and Forward Areas*[2]

Rear-Admiral Sir Anthony Morse, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. ... ... ... 5 Sept. 45—25 April 46
Rear-Admiral H. J. Egerton, C.B. ... ... ... ... ... ... 26 April 46—31 May 46

*Flag Officer Force "G"*

Rear-Admiral T. H. Troubridge, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—27 Dec. 43

*Flag Officer Force "W"*

Rear-Admiral B. C. S. Martin, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... 9 Dec. 44—26 Feb. 46

*Commodore Force "F"*

Commodore C. E. Douglas-Pennant, C.B.E., D.S.C. ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—20 Feb. 44

*Commodore Commanding Eastern Fleet Destroyer Flotillas*

Commodore S. H. T. Arliss, D.S.O.... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 3 June 44
Commodore A. L. Poland, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C. ... ... ... ... 4 June 44—21 Nov. 44

*Commodore Commanding East Indies Fleet Destroyer Flotillas*

Commodore A. L. Poland, C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C. ... ... ... ... 22 Nov. 44—10 Mar. 46

*Captain (D) 2nd Destroyer Flotilla*

Captain J. H. Allison, D.S.O.... ... ... ... ... ... ... 6 Aug. 45—25 Oct. 45

*Captain (D) 4th Destroyer Flotilla*

Captain R. G. Onslow, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 9 Mar. 44— 2 Dec. 44

*Captain (D) 7th Destroyer Flotilla*

Captain H. J. Buchanan, D.S.O., R.A.N. ... ... ... ... ... 2 Nov. 44—18 Feb. 45

*Captain (D) 10th Destroyer Flotilla*

Captain B. Jones, D.S.O., D.S.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... 21 April 45—20 Oct. 45

*Captain (D) 11th Destroyer Flotilla*

Captain F. S. W. de Winton ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—16 Aug. 44
Captain H. W. Biggs, D.S.O.... ... ... ... ... ... ... 17 Aug. 44— 6 Oct. 45

*Captain (D) 26th Destroyer Flotilla*

Captain M. L. Power, C.B.E., D.S.O.... ... ... ... ... ... 8 Feb. 45—17 Nov. 45

*Captain (S/M) 2nd Submarine Flotilla*

Captain J. E. Slaughter, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 19 Aug. 44—13 Oct. 45

*Captain (S/M) 4th Submarine Flotilla*

Captain R. M. G. Gambier ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 6 Dec. 43
Captain H. M. C. Ionides, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 Dec. 43—2 April 45

[1] See note 2, page 261. Rear-Admiral Mansfield held the appointment of Flag Officer Ceylon only.
[2] The appointment was " Flag Officer Malaya " only until 4th December 1945.

*Captain (S/M) 8th Submarine Flotilla*

Captain L. M. Shadwell ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 12 Mar. 44—25 Aug. 44

*Captain Coastal Forces Eastern Theatre* ...

Captain J. Ryland, R.I.N. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 1 April 44—21 Nov. 44

*Captain Coastal Forces East Indies*

Captain J. Ryland, R.I.N. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 22 Nov. 44—15 April 45
Captain T. Kerr, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 April 45—30 Nov. 45

*Captain (Minesweepers) Forward Areas*

Captain R. H. V. Sivewright, D.S.C. ... ... ... ... ... 10 Aug. 45— 5 Oct. 45

*Commanding Officer Burma R.N.V.R.*

Captain K. S. Lyle ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 22 Aug. 45—31 May 46

## 3. Senior Officers of Land Forces in S.E.A.C.

11 Army Group (*became A.L.F.S.E.A. on 12 Nov. 44*)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| C.-in-C. | General Sir George Giffard, G.C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C. ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—12 Nov. 44 |
| M.G.G.S. | Maj.-General I. S. O. Playfair, C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—12 Nov. 44 |
| M.G.A. | Maj.-General E. N. Goddard, C.I.E., C.B.E., M.V.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43—12 Nov. 44 |
| D.M.S. | Maj.-General T. O. Thompson, C.B., C.B.E., M.D. ... ... | 1 Mar. 44—12 Nov. 44 |

Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia (*A.L.F.S.E.A.*) (*from 12 Nov. 44*)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| C.-in-C. | Lieut.-General Sir Oliver Leese, BT., K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.... | 12 Nov. 44— 6 July 45 |
| C.-in-C. | Lieut.-General Sir Philip Christison, Bart., K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. (officiating) ... ... ... ... ... | 6 July 45—15 Aug. 45 |
| C.-in-C. | General Sir William Slim, G.B.E., K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Aug. 45— 8 Dec. 45 |
| C.-in-C. | Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. | 8 Dec. 45—19 April 46 |
| C.-in-C. | Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. | 19 April 46—31 May 46 |
| C.G.S. | Maj.-General G. P. Walsh, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... | 1 Dec. 44—13 Aug. 45 |
| C.G.S. | Maj.-General H. E. Pyman, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... | 13 Aug. 45—20 May 46 |
| C.G.S. | Maj.-General H. Redman, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... | 20 May 46—31 May 46 |
| M.G.G.S. | Maj.-General I. S. O. Playfair, C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... | 12 Nov. 44—15 July 45[1] |
| M.G.A. | Maj.-General E. N. Goddard, C.I.E., C.B.E., M.V.O., M.C. ... | 12 Nov. 44—19 Dec. 44 |
| M.G.A. | Maj.-General E. M. Bastyan, C.B., C.B.E. ... ... ... | 19 Dec. 44— 1 Mar. 46 |
| M.G.A. | Maj.-General H. R. Kerr, C.B., O.B.E., M.C. ... ... ... | 1 Mar. 46—31 May 46 |
| C.S.O. | Maj.-General R. H. R. Steward, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 13 Jan. 45— 6 May 46[2] |
| C.E. | Maj.-General K. Ray, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... | 13 Jan. 45— 1 July 45 |
| C.E. | Maj.-General W. F. Hasted, C.B., C.I.E., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. | 1 July 45— 5 Jan. 46 |
| C.E. | Maj.-General P. A. Ullman, C.B., O.B.E. ... ... ... | 5 Jan. 46—31 May 46 |
| D.A.G. | Maj.-General K. G. McLean, C.B. ... ... ... ... | 26 April 45— 1 May 46[2] |
| D.Q.M.G. | Maj.-General R. A. Riddell, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... | 26 April 45—31 May 46 |
| D.M.S. | Maj.-General T. O. Thompson, C.B., C.B.E., M.D. ... ... | 12 Nov. 44— 7 April 45 |
| D.M.S. | Maj.-General W. E. Tyndall, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., M.B. ... | 7 April 45—31 May 46 |

*Senior American Staff Officers with A.L.F.S.E.A.*

Brig.-General R. T. Maddocks (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... 8 Dec. 44—25 April 45
Brig.-General T. F. Wessells (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... 3 Dec. 44— 1 Feb. 45

Fourteenth Army (*became Malaya Command on 8 Dec. 45*)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| G.O.C.-in-C. | Lieut.-General Sir William Slim, K.C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43—10 Aug. 45 |
| G.O.C.-in-C. | Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O. M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 10 Aug. 45— 8 Dec. 45 |

[1] Appointment lapsed.

[2] Appointment downgraded.

TWELFTH ARMY (*became Burma Command on 1 Oct. 45*)

G.O.C.-in-C. Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 15 May 45— 1 Oct. 45

BURMA COMMAND

G.O.C.-in-C. Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 1 Oct. 45—30 Jan. 46
G.O.C.-in-C. Lieut.-General H. R. Briggs, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... 30 Jan. 46—31 May 46

MALAYA COMMAND

G.O.C.-in-C. Lieut.-General Sir Frank Messervy, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. ... 8 Dec. 45—31 May 46

CEYLON ARMY COMMAND

G.O.C.-in-C. Lieut.-General H. E. de R. Wetherall, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E. M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 8 Jan. 45
G.O.C.-in-C. Lieut.-General F. I. S. Tuker, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E.... ... 22 Jan. 45—14 July 45
G.O.C.-in-C. Maj.-General H. P. Sparks, M.C. ... ... ... ... 14 July 45—31 May 46

COMBINED ARMY AIR TRANSPORT ORGANISATION (C.A.A.T.O.)

Brigadier J. A. Dawson, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 Oct. 44—22 Jan. 46

## AMERICAN AND CHINESE FORCES

NORTHERN COMBAT AREA COMMAND (*reorganised* 1 *Feb.* 44)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Commanding General | General J. W. Stilwell (U.S. Army) ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—23 Oct. 44 |
| Commanding General | Lieut.-General D. I. Sultan (U.S. Army) ... | 24 Oct. 44—22 June 45 |
| Commanding General | Lieut.-General R. A. Wheeler (U.S. Army) ... | 23 June 45— 4 Oct. 45 |
| Commander | Brig.-General H. L. Boatner (U.S. Army) ... | 1 Feb. 44—25 June 44 |
| Chief of Staff | Brig.-General R. M. Cannon (U.S. Army) ... | 1 Feb. 44—18 Sept. 45 |

U.S. 5307 COMPOSITE REGIMENT (GALAHAD FORCE)

Brig.-General F. D. Merrill (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 4 Jan. 44—19 May 44

U.S. 5332 BRIGADE (MARS BRIGADE)

Brig.-General T. S. Arms (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 26 July 44—30 Oct. 44
Brig.-General J. P. Willey (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 1 Nov. 44—17 May 45

124 *U.S. Cavalry Regiment*

Colonel M. H. Matteson (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 30 Aug. 44— 2 Nov. 44
Colonel T. J. Heavey (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... ... 2 Nov. 44—11 Jan. 45
Colonel W. L. Osborne (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 11 Jan. 45—13 Feb. 45
Lieut.-Colonel L. O. Pegg (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... 13 Feb. 45—27 April 45

475 *U.S. Infantry Regiment*

Lieut.-Colonel W. L. Osborne (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... 5 Aug. 44— 4 Oct. 44
Colonel E. F. Easterbrook (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 4 Oct. 44—13 Feb. 45
Colonel W. L. Osborne (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 13 Feb. 45—25 Mar. 45

MYITKYINA TASK FORCE

Brig.-General F. D. Merrill (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... ... 3 May 44—19 May 44
Brig.-General J. E. McCammon (U.S. Army) ... ... ... ... 19 May 44—30 May 44
Brig.-General H. L. Boatner (U.S. Army)... ... ... ... ... 30 May 44—26 June 44
Brig.-General T. F. Wessells (U.S. Army)... ... ... ... ... 27 June 44—14 Aug. 44

CHINESE ARMY IN INDIA

| | |
|---|---|
| Commanding General | General J. W. Stilwell (U.S. Army) ... |
| Chief of Staff | Brig.-General H. L. Boatner (U.S. Army) |
| Chief of Staff (Rear Echelon) | Brig.-General W. E. Bergin (U.S. Army) |
| D.M.S. | Maj.-General Robert S. K. Lim (U.S. Army) |
| Chinese Commander | Lieut.-General Cheng Tung-kuo ... |

ORIGINAL CHINESE FORCE OF TWO DIVISIONS (*until 10 Sept. 44*)

22 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Liao Yao-hsiang

38 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Sun Li-jen

NEW FIRST CHINESE ARMY (*after 10 Sept. 44*)

Lieut.-General Sun Li-jen

30 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Tang Shou-chih

38 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Li-hung

NEW SIXTH CHINESE ARMY (*after 10 Sept. 44*)

Lieut.-General Liao Yao-hsiang

14 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Lung Tien-wu

22 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Li Tao

50 *Chinese Division*

Maj.-General Pan Yu-Kuang

CHINESE-U.S. ARMOURED UNIT

Colonel R. Brown (U.S. Army)

CHINESE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE FROM YUNNAN

| | |
|---|---|
| C.-in-C. | General Wei Li-huang |
| Chief of Staff | Lieut.-General Hsaio Yi-Shu |
| Senior U.S. Liaison Officer | Brig.-General F. Dorn (U.S Army) |
| Senior British Liaison Officer | Brigadier A. T. Wilson-Brand |

ELEVENTH CHINESE ARMY GROUP

General Sung Hsi-lien

## COMMANDERS OF SUBORDINATE LAND FORMATIONS

4 CORPS

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieut.-General Sir Geoffrey Scoones, K.B.E., C.S.I., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... | 16 Nov. 43— 8 Dec. 44 |
| Lieut.-General Sir Frank Messervy, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. ... ... ... | 8 Dec. 44— 1 Nov. 45 |
| Lieut.-General F. I. S. Tuker, C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E. (Acting Corps Commander during absence on leave of Lieut.-General Messervy) ... | 14 July 45—18 Aug. 45 |

15 CORPS (*became Allied Forces N.E.I. on 30 Sept. 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieut.-General Sir Philip Christison, BT., K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43—30 Sept. 45 |

33 CORPS
Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... 23 Nov. 43—15 May 45

34 CORPS
Lieut.-General O. L. Roberts, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... 12 Mar. 45— 1 Nov. 45

L. OF C. COMMAND (BURMA) (*became South Burma District on 1 June 45*)
Maj.-General G. W. Symes, C.B., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 8 Dec. 44— 1 June 45

SOUTH BURMA DISTRICT
Maj.-General G. W. Symes, C.B., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 1 June 45— 1 Jan. 46

505 DISTRICT
Maj.-General A. H. J. Snelling, C.B., C.B.E. ... ... ... ... 9 Mar. 45— 1 Jan. 46

202 L. OF C. AREA
Maj.-General R. P. L. Ranking, C.B.E., M.C. ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 1 Jan. 46

404 L. OF C. AREA
Brigadier T. R. Henry, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 7 Jan. 45
Brigadier M. L. Hayne, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 Jan. 45— 1 Jan. 46

TRINCOMALEE FORTRESS (*Sub-Area from 11 Jan. 45*)
Maj.-General R. Richardson, C.B., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 23 Dec. 43—10 Jan. 45
Brigadier A. E. Hunt... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 11 Jan. 45—17 July 45
Brigadier J. P. Kellett, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... 18 July 45—31 May 46

ALLIED FORCES, NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES
Lieut.-General Sir Philip Christison, BT., K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... 30 Sept. 45—30 Jan. 46
Lieut.-General Sir Montagu Stopford, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... 30 Jan. 46—19 April 46
Lieut.-General E. C. Mansergh, C.B., C.B.E., M.C. ... ... ... ... 19 April 46—31 May 46

BRITISH TROOPS, SIAM
Maj.-General G. Brunskill, C.B., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 26 Jan. 46—31 May 46

LAND FORCES, HONG KONG
Maj.-General F. W. Festing, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... 29 Aug. 45—31 May 46

2 BRITISH DIVISION
Maj.-General J. M. L. Grover, M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 5 July 44
Maj.-General C. G. G. Nicholson, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... 5 July 44— 2 April 46
Maj.-General R. H. B. Arkwright, C.B., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... 11 April 46—31 May 46

*4 Infantry Brigade*
Brigadier W. H. Goschen ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 7 May 44
Brigadier J. A. Theobalds, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 May 44—16 May 44
Brigadier R. S. McNaught, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 June 44—12 Oct. 45
Brigadier J. J. McCully, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 13 Oct. 45—15 Mar. 46

*5 Infantry Brigade*
Brigadier V. F. S. Hawkins, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—16 May 44
Brigadier M. M. Alston-Roberts-West, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... 16 May 44—12 Oct. 45
Brigadier R. S. McNaught, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 13 Oct. 45—31 May 46

*6 Infantry Brigade*
Brigadier J. D. Shapland, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—10 May 44
Brigadier W. G. Smith, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 10 May 44—23 May 46
Brigadier F. W. Sandars, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 23 May 46—31 May 46

SPECIAL FORCE (3 INDIAN DIVISION)

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General O. C. Wingate, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—24 Mar. 44 |
| Maj.-General W. D. A. Lentaigne, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 30 Mar. 44—10 Mar. 45 |

14 *Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier T. Brodie | 16 Nov. 43— 8 Feb. 45 |

16 *Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier B. E. Fergusson, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43— 1 Sept. 44 |
| Brigadier C. J. Wilkinson, D.S.O. | 1 Sept. 44—30 Dec. 44 |
| Brigadier K. Bayley, C.B.E. | 21 Sept. 45—31 May 46 |

23 *Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier L. E. C. M. Perowne, C.B.E. | 16 Nov. 43— 2 July 45 |
| Brigadier R. G. Collingwood, D.S.O. | 11 July 45—13 Mar. 46 |
| Brigadier A. de L. Cazenove, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.V.O. | 13 Mar. 46—31 May 46 |

77 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier J. M. Calvert, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—15 Feb. 45 |

111 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier W. D. A. Lentaigne, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—30 Mar. 44 |
| Brigadier J. R. Morris, D.S.O. | 30 Mar. 44—14 Oct. 44 |
| Brigadier F. D. Rome, D.S.O. | 14 Oct. 44—11 May 45 |

3 *West African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier A. H. Gillmore, O.B.E. | 15 Feb. 44—30 Nov. 44 |

5 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General H. R. Briggs, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—11 July 44 |
| Maj.-General D. F. W. Warren, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 23 Sept. 44— 9 Feb. 45 |
| Maj.-General E. C. Mansergh, C.B., C.B.E., M.C. | 22 Feb. 45—19 April 46 |

9 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier G. C. Evans, D.S.O. | 14 Feb. 44—25 Feb. 44 |
| Brigadier J. A. Salomons, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 25 Feb. 44—26 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier H. G. L. Brain, O.B.E. | 26 Mar. 45—31 May 46 |

123 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier T. J. W. Winterton, C.B.E. | 16 Nov. 43—15 Feb. 44 |
| Brigadier G. C. Evans, D.S.O. | 25 Feb. 44—21 July 44 |
| Brigadier E. J. Denholm-Young, D.S.O. | 21 July 44—31 May 46 |

161 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier D. F. W. Warren, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 16 Nov. 43—22 Sept. 44 |
| Brigadier R. G. C. Poole | 25 Sept. 44— 3 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier E. H. W. Grimshaw | 3 Mar. 45—29 Dec. 45 |
| Brigadier G. P. L. Weston, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 29 Dec. 45—11 May 46 |

7 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General Frank Messervy, C.B., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43— 8 Dec. 44 |
| Maj.-General G. C. Evans, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. | 29 Dec. 44— 7 Feb. 46 |
| Maj.-General O. de T. Lovett, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 7 Feb. 46—31 May 46 |

33 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier F. J. Loftus-Tottenham, D.S.O. ... | 16 Nov. 43—24 Aug. 44 |
| Brigadier R. G. Collingwood, D.S.O. ... | 24 Aug. 44—19 May 45 |
| Brigadier J. S. Vickers, D.S.O. ... | 19 May 45— 6 Dec. 45 |
| Brigadier E. H. W. Cobb, C.B.E. ... | 10 Dec. 45—31 May 46 |

89 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier J. C. Martin, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43—11 Dec. 43 |
| Brigadier W. A. Crowther, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... | 11 Dec. 43—21 June 45 |
| Brigadier H. R. R. Conder, O.B.E. ... | 21 June 45—24 July 45 |
| Brigadier I. C. A. Lauder, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... | 25 July 45— 6 April 46 |
| Brigadier P. G. Hatch, O.B.E. ... | 6 April 46— 5 May 46 |
| Brigadier R. A. Hutton, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... | 5 May 46—31 May 46 |

114 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier M. R. Roberts, D.S.O. ... | 16 Nov. 43—23 June 44 |
| Brigadier H. W. Dinwiddie ... | 23 June 44—25 Feb. 46 |
| Brigadier M. V. Wright, D.S.O. ... | 25 Feb. 46—31 May 46 |

11 EAST AFRICAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General C. C. Fowkes, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43— 3 Jan 45 |
| Maj.-General E. C. Mansergh, O.B.E., M.C. ... | 5 Jan. 45—22 Feb. 45 |
| Maj.-General W. A. Dimoline, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 28 Feb. 45—31 May 46 |

21 *East African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier J. F. Macnab, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... | 31 Dec. 43—31 May 46 |

25 *East African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier J. B. Bettington, D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43—13 May 44 |
| Brigadier N. C. Hendriks ... | 13 May 44—30 Nov. 44 |
| Brigadier G. H. Cree, D.S.O. ... | 10 Dec. 44—18 Oct. 45 |

26 *East African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier R. C. B. Anderson, D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43— 9 April 44 |
| Brigadier V. K. H. Channer ... | 10 April 44—14 Nov. 44 |
| Brigadier A. P. Walsh ... | 18 Nov. 44— 9 April 45 |
| Brigadier A. J. Stocker, D.S.O. ... | 26 May 45—31 May 46 |

17 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General D. T. Cowan, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43—30 May 45 |
| Maj.-General W. A. Crowther, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... | 22 June 45—31 May 46 |

48 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier R. T. Cameron, D.S.O. ... | 16 Nov. 43—31 May 44 |
| Brigadier R. C. O. Hedley, D.S.O. ... | 31 May 44— 9 July 45 |
| Brigadier J. A. R. Robertson, D.S.O., M.B.E. ... | 9 July 45—31 May 46 |

63 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier A. E. Cumming, V.C., O.B.E., M.C. ... | 16 Nov. 43—13 Jan. 44 |
| Brigadier G. W. S. Burton, D.S.O. ... | 13 Jan. 44— 3 Aug. 45 |
| Brigadier M. R. Smeeton, D.S.O., M.B.E., M.C. ... | 3 Aug. 45—31 May 46 |

99 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier J. J. L. MacKirdy ... | 16 Nov. 43—21 Jan. 45 |
| Brigadier G. L. Tarver ... | 21 Jan. 45—25 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier M. V. Wright, D.S.O. ... | 25 Mar. 45— 3 Mar. 46 |

19 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General T. W. Rees, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43—22 Dec. 45 |
| Maj.-General O. de T. Lovett, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 23 Dec. 45— 6 Feb. 46 |
| Maj.-General P. C. Marindin, D.S.O., M.C. | 7 Feb. 46—15 May 46 |

*62 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier D. C. Hawthorn, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—26 Oct. 44 |
| Brigadier J. R. Morris, D.S.O. | 26 Oct. 44— 3 April 45 |
| Brigadier G. H. B. Beyts, D.S.O., M.B.E., M.C. | 3 April 45—17 Aug. 45 |
| Brigadier J. R. Morris, D.S.O. | 18 Aug. 45— 8 Mar. 46 |

*64 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier G. A. Bain | 16 Nov. 43—16 Jan. 45 |
| Brigadier J. G. Flewett, D.S.O. | 8 Feb. 45—31 May 46 |

*98 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier C. I. Jerrard, C.B.E. | 1 Jan. 44—31 May 46 |

20 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General D. D. Gracey, C.B., C.B.E., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43— 4 Feb. 46 |

*32 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier D. A. L. Mackenzie, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—25 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier E. C. J. Woodford, D.S.O. | 25 Mar. 45—31 May 46 |

*80 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier S. Greeves, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43—18 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier D. E. Taunton, D.S.O. | 18 Mar. 45—29 June 45 |
| Brigadier G. L. Roberts | 30 June 45—25 July 45 |
| Brigadier D. L. Betts, O.B.E. | 26 July 45—17 Nov. 45 |
| Brigadier D. E. Taunton, D.S.O. | 8 Feb. 46—31 May 46 |

*100 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier W. A. L. James, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43— 7 Oct. 44 |
| Brigadier C. H. B. Rodham, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C. | 7 Oct. 44— 4 Feb. 46 |

21 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General C. G. G. Nicholson, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. | 17 April 44— 5 July 44 |

*23 Infantry (L.R.P.) Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier L. E. C. M. Perowne, C.B.E. | 17 April 44— 5 July 44 |

*33 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier F. J. Loftus-Tottenham | 17 April 44— 5 July 44 |

*161 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier D. F. W. Warren, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 17 April 44— 5 July 44 |

*268 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier G. M. Dyer, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 17 April 44— 5 July 44 |

*3 Commando Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier W. I. Nonweiler | 17 April 44— 5 July 44 |

23 INDIAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General O. L. Roberts, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—24 Mar. 45 |
| Maj.-General D. C. Hawthorn, C.B., D.S.O. | 24 Mar. 45—31 May 46 |

1 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier R. C. McCay, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—25 Feb. 44
Brigadier R. C. M. King, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 25 Feb. 44—12 Jan. 46
Brigadier K. T. Darling, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 12 Jan. 46—25 Feb. 46
Brigadier N. D. Wingrove, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 26 Feb. 46—31 May 46

37 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier H. V. Collingridge, D.S.O., O.B.E.... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 5 June 44
Brigadier J. F. Marindin, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 5 June 44—26 July 44
Brigadier N. Macdonald, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 26 July 44—31 May 46

49 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier F. A. Esse, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—12 Sept. 44
Brigadier A. W. S. Mallaby, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 12 Sept. 44—30 Oct. 45
Brigadier K. S. Thimayya ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 30 Oct. 45—26 Nov. 45
Brigadier A. de B. Morris, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 27 Nov. 45—31 May 46

25 INDIAN DIVISION

Maj.-General H. L. Davies, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—11 Aug. 44
Maj.-General G. N. Wood, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... 14 Oct. 44—24 Feb. 46

51 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier T. H. Angus, D.S.O., M.C.... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 6 Nov. 44
Brigadier R. A. Hutton, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 6 Nov. 44—21 Sept. 45
Brigadier J. M. K. Bradford, D.S.O.... ... ... ... ... ... 22 Sept. 45—19 Jan. 46
Brigadier R. A. Hutton, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 20 Jan. 46— 4 May 46

53 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier G. A. P. Coldstream, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 6 Mar. 44— 5 Aug. 44
Brigadier A. G. O'C. Scott, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 5 Aug. 44—28 Dec. 44
Brigadier B. C. H. Gerty, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 29 Dec. 44— 2 Dec. 45
Brigadier L. J. C. Loch ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 3 Dec. 45— 2 Feb. 46
Brigadier J. M. K. Bradford, D.S.O.... ... ... ... ... ... 3 Feb. 46—19 Mar. 46
Brigadier B. C. H. Gerty, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 20 Mar. 46—31 May 46

74 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier J. E. Hirst, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—31 Mar. 45
Brigadier J. C. W. Cargill, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 31 Mar. 46—31 May 46

26 INDIAN DIVISION

Maj.-General C. E. N. Lomax, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—20 Mar. 45
Maj.-General H. M. Chambers, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 25 Mar. 45—30 Jan. 46
Maj.-General R. C. O. Hedley, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 30 Jan. 46—31 May 46

4 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier A. W. Lowther, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—19 Jan. 45
Brigadier J. F. R. Forman, C.B.E., D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... 19 Jan. 45—26 Jan. 46
(Lieut.-Colonel R. S. Cresswell officiated in command 26 Jan. 46—9 Mar. 46)
Brigadier J. R. Morris, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 9 Mar. 46—31 May 46

36 *Indian Infantry Brigade*

Brigadier L. C. Thomas, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 1 April 45
Brigadier K. S. Thimayya ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 1 April 45— 1 Sept. 45
Brigadier G. L. Roberts, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 1 Sept. 45—11 Dec. 45
Brigadier J. A. Mellsop ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 12 Dec. 45—31 May 46

*71 Indian Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier G. G. C. Bull, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 16 Nov. 43—28 Jan. 44 |
| Brigadier R. C. Cotterell-Hill, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C. | 28 Jan. 44— 1 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier H. M. Chambers, C.B.E. | 1 Mar. 45—22 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier H. P. L. Hutchinson | 22 Mar. 45—31 May 46 |

36 BRITISH DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General F. W. Festing, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—29 Aug. 45 |

(Brigadier A. R. Aslett, D.S.O., officiated in command 21 May 45—29 Aug. 45)

*26 Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier M. B. Jennings, C.B.E. | 31 Oct. 44—22 May 45 |
| Brigadier L. Gwydyr-Jones, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 22 May 45— 8 Oct. 46 |

*29 Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier H. C. Stockwell, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43— 9 Jan. 45 |
| Brigadier G. E. R. Bastin, O.B.E. | 9 Jan. 45—18 Aug. 45 |
| Brigadier J. J. McCully, D.S.O. | 18 Aug. 45— 8 Oct. 45 |

*72 Infantry Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier A. R. Aslett, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—21 May 45 |

81 WEST AFRICAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General C. G. Woolner, C.B., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43—14 Aug. 44 |
| Maj.-General F. J. Loftus-Tottenham, D.S.O. | 24 Aug. 44—28 Mar. 46 |

*5 West African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier E. H. Collins | 16 Nov. 43—16 Sept. 44 |
| Brigadier P. J. Jeffreys, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 16 Sept. 44—28 Mar. 46 |

*6 West African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier J. W. A. Hayes, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—13 Mar. 44 |
| Brigadier R. N. Cartwright | 26 Mar. 44— 1 July 44 |
| Brigadier A. A. Crook, D.S.O. | 6 Aug. 44—31 May 46 |

*14 West African (A.A.) Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier D. H. M. Carberry, M.C., D.F.C. | 16 Nov. 43—20 Nov. 45 |

82 WEST AFRICAN DIVISION

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General G. McI. I. S. Bruce, O.B.E., M.C. | 16 Nov. 43— 9 Feb. 45 |
| Maj.-General H. C. Stockwell, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 9 Feb. 45—22 May 45 |
| Maj.-General C. R. A. Swynnerton, D.S.O. | 23 May 45—13 July 45 |
| Maj.-General H. C. Stockwell, C.B.E., D.S.O. | 14 July 45—28 May 46 |

*1 West African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier C. R. A. Swynnerton, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—22 May 45 |
| Brigadier F. W. Clowes | 23 May 45—13 July 45 |
| Brigadier C. R. A. Swynnerton, D.S.O. | 14 July 45—28 May 46 |

*2 West African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier E. W. D. Western, D.S.O. | 16 Nov. 43—23 Mar. 45 |
| Brigadier A. T. Wilson-Brand | 23 Mar. 45— 5 Aug. 45 |
| Brigadier F. W. Clowes | 5 Aug. 45—28 April 46 |

*4 West African Brigade*

| | |
|---|---|
| Brigadier H. Gibbons, M.C. | 16 Nov. 43—20 Oct. 44 |
| Brigadier A. H. G. Ricketts, D.S.O., O.B.E. | 20 Oct. 44—14 Aug. 45 |

*4 West African Brigade (continued)*

Brigadier N. C. Stockwell ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 14 Aug. 45— 4 Dec. 45
Brigadier A. H. G. Ricketts, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 5 Dec. 45—31 May 46

116 INDIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

Brigadier W. D. Edwards ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—19 July 45
Brigadier J. A. Salomons, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 19 July 45—31 May 46

268 INDIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE

Brigadier G. M. Dyer, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—13 July 45
Brigadier G. L. Roberts, O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 26 July 45—31 Aug. 45
Brigadier K. S. Thimayya ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 1 Sept. 45—31 May 46

22 EAST AFRICAN BRIGADE

Brigadier R. F. Johnstone ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 1 June 44—19 May 46

28 EAST AFRICAN BRIGADE

Brigadier H. G. Veasey, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—14 May 44
Brigadier W. A. Dimoline, C.B.E., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 15 May 44—20 Feb. 45
Brigadier T. H. S. Galletly, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 21 Feb. 45—23 May 45

3 COMMANDO BRIGADE

Brigadier W. I. Nonweiler ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 Dec. 43—26 Nov. 44
Brigadier P. G. Young ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 27 Nov. 44—18 Dec. 44
Brigadier C. R. Hardy, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 19 Dec. 44—29 April 46

LUSHAI BRIGADE

Brigadier P. C. Marindin, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... 1 Jan. 44—26 Feb. 46

50 INDIAN TANK BRIGADE

Brigadier G. H. N. Todd, M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Mar. 44—28 June 45
Brigadier R. O. Critchley ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 28 June 45—31 May 46

254 INDIAN TANK BRIGADE

Brigadier R. L. Scoones, D.S.O., O.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 3 Mar. 45
Brigadier W. W. A. Loring ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 4 Mar. 45—18 Sept. 45

255 INDIAN TANK BRIGADE

Brigadier C. E. Pert, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—30 May 45
Brigadier R. Younger, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... 30 May 45— 8 Dec. 45
Brigadier J. M. W. Martin, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... 9 Dec. 45—14 Mar. 46

5 PARACHUTE BRIGADE

Brigadier J. H. N. Poett, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43—15 Feb. 46
Brigadier K. T. Darling, D.S.O. ... ... ... ... ... ... 15 Feb. 46—31 May 46

50 INDIAN PARACHUTE BRIGADE

Brigadier M. R. J. Hope-Thompson, D.S.O., M.C. ... ... ... ... 16 Nov. 43— 1 April 44
Brigadier E. G. Woods, D.S.O., M.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... 22 May 44—31 May 46

## 4. Senior Officers of Air Forces in S.E.A.C.

### Air Command, South-East Asia (A.C.S.E.A.)

*Allied Air C.-in-C.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, K.C.B., D.S.O., A.F.C. | 16 Nov. 43—27 Nov. 44 |
| Air Marshal Sir Guy Garrod, K.C.B., O.B.E., M.C., D.F.C. | 27 Nov. 44—24 Feb. 45 |
| Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, K.C.B., K.B.E., M.C., D.F.C. | 24 Feb. 45—23 April 46 |
| Air Marshal Sir George Pirie, K.B.E., C.B., M.C., D.F.C. | 23 April 46—31 May 46 |

*Deputy Allied Air C.-in-C.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Marshal Sir Guy Garrod, K.C.B., O.B.E., M.C., D.F.C. | 16 Nov. 43—27 Nov. 44 |
| Air Vice-Marshal G. Harcourt-Smith, C.B.E., M.V.O. | 27 Nov. 44—12 June 45 |
| Air Marshal George C. Pirie, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., D.F.C. | 12 June 45—23 April 46 |

*Senior Air Staff Officer*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal J. W. Baker, M.C., D.F.C. | 16 Nov. 43—20 Oct. 44 |
| Air Vice-Marshal G. Harcourt-Smith, C.B.E., M.V.O. | 20 Oct. 44—27 Nov. 44 |
| Brig.-General J. P. McConnell (U.S.A.A.F.) | 27 Nov. 44—12 June 45 |
| Air Vice-Marshal G. Harcourt-Smith, C.B.E., M.V.O. | 12 June 45— 6 Feb. 46 |
| Air Vice-Marshal C. E. N. Guest, C.B.E. | 6 Feb. 46—31 May 46 |

*Air Officer (Administration)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal R. V. Goddard, C.B., C.B.E. | 16 Nov. 43— 8 April 44 |
| Air Marshal A. Lees, C.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C. | 8 April 44— 1 Oct. 44 |
| Air Marshal R. V. Goddard, C.B., C.B.E. | 1 Oct. 44— 6 Jan. 46 |
| Air Vice-Marshal J. D. I. Hardman, C.B., O.B.E., D.F.C. | 6 Jan. 46—31 May 46 |

### Eastern Air Command (*disbanded on 1 June 45*)

*Air Commander (and Second in Command, A.C.S.E.A.)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Lieut.-General George E. Stratemeyer (U.S.A.A.F.) | 15 Dec. 43— 1 June 45 |

*Assistant Air Commander*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal T. M. Williams, C.B., O.B.E., M.C., D.F.C. | 15 Dec. 43— 4 Dec. 44 |
| Air Marshal Sir Alec Coryton, K.B.E., C.B., M.V.O., D.F.C. | 4 Dec. 44— 1 June 45 |

### Headquarters R.A.F., Burma (*became Air H.Q. Burma on 20 Sept. 45*)

*Air Marshal Commanding*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Marshal Sir Alec Coryton, K.B.E., C.B., M.V.O., D.F.C. | 4 Dec. 44—10 Aug. 45 |
| Air Marshal Sir Hugh Saunders, K.B.E., C.B., M.C., D.F.C., M.M. | 10 Aug. 45—31 May 46 |

*Senior Air Staff Officer*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal G. E. Gibbs, C.B.E., M.C. | 4 Dec. 44—12 April 45 |
| Air Vice-Marshal N. L. Desoer, C.B.E. | 4 May 45— 1 Oct. 45[1] |

### Third Tactical Air Force (*disbanded on 4 Dec. 44*)

*Air Commander*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O. | 15 Dec. 43—15 Aug. 44 |
| Air Marshal Sir Alec Coryton, K.B.E., C.B., M.V.O., D.F.C. | 15 Aug. 44— 4 Dec. 44 |

*Senior Air Staff Officer*

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal G. E. Gibbs, M.C. | 23 Dec. 43— 4 Dec. 44 |

[1] Appointment downgraded.

STRATEGIC AIR FORCE (*disbanded on 1 June 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Brig.-General Howard C. Davidson (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... | 15 Dec. 43—20 June 44 |
| Air Commodore F. J. W. Mellersh, C.B.E., A.F.C.... ... ... ... | 20 June 44— 1 June 45 |

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE FORCE (*disbanded on 1 June 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Group Captain S. G. Wise, D.F.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Feb. 44— 9 Jan. 45 |
| Colonel Minton W. Kaye (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... ... ... | 9 Jan. 45— 1 June 45 |

TROOP CARRIER COMMAND (*disbanded on 20 June 44*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Brig.-General William D. Old (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... ... | 15 Dec. 43—20 June 44 |

COMBAT CARGO TASK FORCE (*disbanded on 1 June 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Brig.-General Frederick W. Evans (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... ... | 15 Sept. 44— 1 June 45 |

10TH U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE (*withdrawn on 1 June 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Maj.-General Howard C. Davidson (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... | 20 June 44— 1 June 45 |

NORTHERN AIR SECTOR FORCE (U.S.A.A.F.) (*disbanded on 20 June 44*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Brig.-General J. F. Egan (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... ... ... | 15 Dec. 43—20 June 44 |

No. 1 AIR COMMANDO (U.S.A.A.F.) (*disbanded on 21 May 44*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Colonel Philip Cochrane (U.S.A.A.F.) ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Jan. 44—21 May 44 |

221 GROUP R.A.F. (*disbanded on 30 Sept. 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Commodore H. V. Rowley ... ... ... ... ... ... | 15 Dec. 43—17 Feb. 44 |
| Air Vice-Marshal S. F. Vincent, C.B., D.F.C., A.F.C. ... ... ... | 17 Feb. 44—12 June 45 |
| Air Vice-Marshal C. A. Bouchier, C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C. ... ... ... | 12 June 45—30 Sept. 45 |

222 GROUP R.A.F. (*disbanded on 15 Oct. 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal A. Lees, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C. ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—28 Mar. 44 |
| Air Marshal A. Durston, C.B., A.F.C. ... ... ... ... ... | 28 Mar. 44—13 Aug. 45 |
| Air Vice-Marshal J. D. Breakey, C.B., D.F.C. ... ... ... ... | 13 Aug. 45—30 Sept. 45 |

224 GROUP R.A.F. (*disbanded on 15 Oct. 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Commodore A. Gray, M.C. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 15 Dec. 43—19 July 44 |
| Air Vice-Marshal the Earl of Bandon, C.B., D.S.O. ... ... ... | 19 July 44—15 Oct. 45 |

225 GROUP R.A.F. (*withdrawn on 4 May 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Commodore P. H. Mackworth, O.B.E., D.F.C.... ... ... ... | 16 Nov. 43—23 Aug. 44 |
| Air Vice-Marshal N. L. Desoer, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... | 23 Aug. 44— 4 May 45 |

231 GROUP R.A.F. (*disbanded on 15 Sept. 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Commodore F. J. W. Mellersh, C.B.E., A.F.C.... ... ... ... | 7 Jan. 44—15 June 45 |
| Maj.-General J. T. Durrant, D.F.C. (South African Air Force) ... ... | 15 June 45—15 Sept. 45 |

232 GROUP R.A.F.

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Vice-Marshal J. D. I. Hardman, C.B., O.B.E., D.F.C.... ... ... | 27 Feb. 45— 6 Jan. 46 |
| Air Commodore A. Earle, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 6 Jan. 46— 1 April 46 |
| Air Vice-Marshal H. S. P. Walmsley, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., D.F.C. ... ... | 1 April 46—31 May 46 |

AIR HEADQUARTERS, CEYLON (*formed on 16 Oct. 45*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Air Commodore J. M. Mason, D.S.C., D.F.C. ... ... ... ... | 16 Oct. 45— 1 Jan. 46 |
| Air Commodore C. E. Chilton, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Jan. 46—31 May 46 |

| | |
|---|---|
| HEADQUARTERS R.A.F., FRENCH INDO-CHINA (*formed on 1 Oct. 45*) | |
| Air Commodore W. G. Cheshire ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 1 Oct. 45—15 Feb. 46 |
| HEADQUARTERS R.A.F., NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES (*formed on 1 Oct. 45*) | |
| Air Commodore C. A. Stevens, C.B.E., M.C. ... ... ... ... | 1 Oct. 45—31 May 46 |
| AIR HEADQUARTERS, MALAYA (*formed on 1 Oct. 45*) | |
| Air Vice-Marshal J. D. Breakey, C.B., D.F.C. ... ... ... ... | 1 Oct. 45—31 May 46 |
| AIR HEADQUARTERS, HONG KONG (*formed on 12 Sept. 45*) | |
| Air Commodore W. A. D. Brook, C.B.E. ... ... ... ... ... | 12 Sept. 45—31 May 46 |

# ANNEXURE 10

## STRENGTH OF FORCES IN S.E.A.C.

### I—Strength by Services

| | April 1944 | | | April 1945 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| LAND FORCES— | | | | | | |
| Operational Land Strengths— | | | | | | |
| British and Indian troops ... ... ... ... | 627,476 | | | 561,512 | | |
| African ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 31,653 | | | 37,137 | | |
| U.S. Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 6,635 | | | 12,097 | | |
| British-Chin ... ... ... ... ... ... | 10,419 | | | 7,500 | | |
| Chinese ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 57,942 | | | 72,725 | | |
| French (in Ceylon) ... ... ... ... ... | — | | | 1,000 | | |
| Total ... ... | | 734,125 | | | 691,971 | |
| Lines of Communication Strengths— | | | | | | |
| *Assam* | | | | | | |
| British and Indian troops ... ... ... ... | 136,019 | | | 117,795 | | |
| African ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 2,830 | | | 1,210 | | |
| U.S. Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 31,489 | | | 33,170 | | |
| *West of Brahmaputra* | | | | | | |
| U.S. Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 84,774 | | | 132,526 | | |
| *Ledo Road L. of C.* | | | | | | |
| U.S. Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 19,478 | | | 33,678 | | |
| Total ... ... | | 274,590 | | | 318,379 | |
| Total, Land Forces ... ... | | | 1,008,715 | | | 1,010,350 |
| AIR FORCES— | | | | | | |
| Operational— | | | | | | |
| R.A.F., R.I.A.F. and R.C.A.F. ... ... ... | 43,196 | | | 70,391 | | |
| U.S.A.A.F. ... ... ... ... ... ... | 29,992 | | | 61,145 | | |
| Total ... ... | | 73,188 | | | 131,536 | |
| Non-Operational— | | | | | | |
| R.A.F., R.I.A.F. and R.C.A.F. | | 36,330 | | | 44,440 | |
| Total, Air Forces ... ... | | | 109,518 | | | 175,976 |
| NAVAL FORCES— | | | | | | |
| British, including R.I.N., R.A.N. and S.A.N.F. ... | | 65,000 | | | 115,000 | |
| French (including Richelieu) (approx.) ... ... | | 2,000 | | | 2,000 | |
| Dutch (including Tromp) (approx.) ... ... ... | | 800 | | | 800 | |
| U.S. Naval Personnel ... ... ... ... ... | | 3,100 | | | — | |
| Total, Naval Forces ... ... | | | 70,900 | | | 117,800 |
| Grand Total, all Forces ... ... | | | 1,189,133 | | | 1,304,126 |

## II—Strength by Nations

| | April 1944 | | April 1945 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BRITISH COMMONWEALTH— | | | | |
| Operational Land Forces ... ... ... ... | 669,548 | | 606,149 | |
| Lines of Communication Land Forces ... ... | 138,849 | | 119,005 | |
| Operational Air Forces ... ... ... ... ... | 43,196 | | 70,391 | |
| Non-operational Air Forces ... ... ... ... | 36,330 | | 44,440 | |
| Naval Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 65,000 | | 115,000 | |
| Total ... ... | | 952,923 | | 954,985 |
| UNITED STATES— | | | | |
| Operational Land Forces ... ... ... ... | 6,635 | | 12,097 | |
| Lines of Communication Land Forces ... ... | 135,741 | | 199,374 | |
| Operational Air Forces ... ... ... ... ... | 29,992 | | 61,145 | |
| Naval Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 3,100 | | — | |
| Total ... ... | | 175,468 | | 272,616 |
| CHINESE— | | | | |
| Operational Land Forces ... ... ... ... | | 57,942 | | 72,725 |
| FRENCH— | | | | |
| Operational Land Forces ... ... ... ... | — | | 1,000 | |
| Naval Forces ... ... ... ... ... ... | 2,000 | | 2,000 | |
| Total ... ... | | 2,000 | | 3,000 |
| DUTCH ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | | 800 | | 800 |
| Grand Total ... ... ... | | 1,189,133 | | 1,304,126 |

NOTES

1. The strengths do not include the large numbers of troops either in reserve or resting outside S.E.A.C.

2. The U.S. troops' strength west of the Brahmaputra mainly consisted of air, ground and services' forces engaged in administration, supply and maintenance of air and prospective road traffic, to China and American and Chinese forces operating in Burma.

3. Non-operational air forces were those serving in Base Air Forces, South-East Asia.

4. Between January-April, 1945, 30,000 naval personnel went to form the British Pacific Fleet. These are included in April 1945 total above. Strengths of all naval forces are approximate.

5. The following abbreviations have been used :—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| R.A.N. ... | ... Royal Australian Navy | R.I.N. ... | ... Royal Indian Navy |
| R.C.A.F.... | ... Royal Canadian Air Force | S.A.N.F.... | ... South African Naval Forces |
| R.I.A.F. ... | ... Royal Indian Air Force | U.S.A.A.F. | ... United States Army Air Force |

# GAZETTEER FOR BURMA

The map on which a town, river or other feature in Burma will be found is given below. To assist in the location of places which appear on the general map of Burma (Map 7—facing page 1), a reference to the grid square has been added *in italics*. No attempt has been made to list all the maps on which a name appears.

The index to the maps is on pages vi and vii.


## A

AKYAB . . . . . Map 7, *J.1.*
ALLANMYO . . . . Map 7, *K.4.*
ALLAGAPPA . . . . . Map 26.
ALON . . . . . Map 7, *G.4.*
AN . . . . . . Map 7, *K.3.*
ARAKAN YOMAS . . . . Map 3.
ATWIN YOMAS . . . Map 7, *E.3-F.3.*
AVA . . . . . . . Map 31.

## B

BANMAUK . . . . Map 7, *E.4.*
BARONGA ISLANDS . Map 7, *K.1. & 2.*
BASSEIN . . . . . Map 7, *N.3.*
BAWDWIN MINES . . . . Map 19.
BAWLI BAZAAR . . . Map 7, *H.1.*
BHAMO . . . . . Map 7, *E.6.*
BUDALIN . . . . . Map 7, *G.4.*
BUTHIDAUNG . . . . Map 7, *J.1.*

## C

CHAUK . . . . . Map 7, *J.3.*
CHAUNGMAGYI . . . Map 7, *G.5.*
CHINDWIN . . . Map 7, *D.4-G.3-H.4.*
CHIN HILLS . . . . Map 7, *G.2.*

## D

DAINGBON . . . . . Map 25.
DAIK-U . . . . . Map 7, *M.5.*
DALET . . . . . Map 7, *K.2.*
DALETMO . . . . Map 7, *H.1.*

## E

ELEPHANT POINT . . . Map 7, *N.5.*

## F

FALAM . . . . . Map 7, *G.2.*
FORT HERTZ . . . . Map 7, *B.6.*
FORT WHITE . . . . Map 7, *F.2.*
FOUL POINT . . . . Map 7, *J.1.*

## G

GANGAW . . . . . Map 7, *G.3.*
GOPPE BAZAAR . . . . Map 11.
GWA . . . . . . Map 7, *M.3.*

## H

HAKA . . . . . . Map 7, *G.2.*
HE-HO . . . . . . Map 7, *J.5.*
HENZADA . . . . . Map 7, *M.4.*
HLAING RIVER . . . . Map 32.
HLEGU . . . . . . Map 7, *M.5.*
HMAWBI . . . . . . Map 7, *M.5.*
HOMALIN. . . . . . Map 7, *E.3.*
HOPIN . . . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*
HOSI . . . . . . . Map 7, *F.6.*
HPIMAW . . . . . Map 7, *C./D.7.*
HPONTHA . . . . . . Map 28.
HSENWI . . . . . . Map 7, *F.6.*
HSIPAW . . . . . . Map 7, *G.6.*
HTIZWE . . . . . . . Map 3.
HUKAWNG VALLEY . . Map 7, *C.5.*

## I

INDAINGGYI . . . . . Map 18.
INDAW (Oil) . . . . Map 7, *F.3.*
INDAW (Rail) . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*
INDAWGGYI LAKE . . Map 7, *D.5.*
IRRAWADDY . . . . . Map 7.

## K

KABAW VALLEY . . Map 7, *E.3-F.3.*
KABO . . . . . . Map 7, *G.4.*
KADUMA . . . . . Map 7, *G.4.*
KALADAN . . . Map 7, *H.1.-J.2.*
KALAPANZIN . . . . . Map 3.
KALAW . . . . . . Map 7, *J.5.*
KALEMYO . . . . . Map 7, *F.3.*
KALEWA . . . . . Map 7, *F.3.*
KAMAING . . . . . Map 7, *D.5.*
KAN . . . . . . . Map 7, *G.3.*
KANGAW . . . . . Map 7, *J.2.*
KANTHA . . . . . . Map 25.
KARENNI HILLS . . Map 7, *K.5 & 6.*
KATHA . . . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*

KAUKKWE RIVER . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*
KAWKAREIK . . . . . Map 7, *N.7.*
KAWLIN . . . . . . Map 7, *F.4.*
KENNEDY PEAK . . . . Map 13.
KOGGON . . . . . . Map 7, *F.4.*
KUME . . . . . . Map 7, *H.5.*
KUMON RANGE . . Map 7, *C.6-D.6.*
KUNCHAUNG . . . . . Map 7, *F.5.*
KUNLON . . . . . . Map 7, *J.5.*
KUNLONG . . . . . Map 7, *F.7.*
KYAIKTO . . . . . . Map 7, *M.6.*
KYAUKME . . . . . Map 7, *G.6.*
KYAUKMYAUNG . . . Map 7, *G.4.*
KYAUKPADAUNG . . . Map 7, *J.4.*
KYAUKPYU . . . . . Map 7, *K.2.*
KYAUKSE. . . . . . Map 7, *H.5.*
KYAUKTAN . . . . . Map 7, *N.5.*
KYAUKTAW . . . . . Map 7, *J.1.*
KYUNHLA . . . . . Map 7, *F.4.*
KYWEGUSEIK . . . . . Map 25.


## L


LANYWA . . . . . . Map 7, *J.3.*
LASHIO . . . . . . Map 7, *G.6.*
LETPADAN . . . . . Map 7, *M.4.*
LEWE . . . . . . Map 7, *K.5.*
LOIKAW . . . . . . Map 7, *K.6.*
LOILEM . . . . . . Map 7, *J.6.*
LONKIN . . . . . . Map 7, *D.5.*
LONKIN HILLS . . Map 7, *D.4 & 5.*


## M


MAGWE . . . . . . Map 7, *J.3.*
MAHLAING . . . . . Map 31.
MAINGKWAN . . . . . Map 7, *C.5.*
MANDALAY . . . . . Map 7, *H.5.*
MANHTON . . . . . Map 7, *E.4.*
MANIPUR RIVER . . Map 7, *E.2-G.2-G.3.*
MARTABAN . . . . . Map 7, *N.6.*
MAUKKADAW . . . . Map 7, *F./G.3.*
MAUNGDAW . . . . . Map 7, *J.1.*
MAUNGHNAMA . . . . . Map 11.
MAWCHI . . . . . . Map 32.
MAWHUN. . . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*
MAWLAIK . . . . . Map 7, *F.3.*
MAWLU . . . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*
MAYMYO . . . . . Map 7, *G.5.*
MAYU RIVER . . . . Map 7, *J.1.*
MEIKTILA . . . . . Map 7, *J.4.*
MERGUI . . . . Map 7, *Inset R.7.*
MEZA RIVER . . . Map 7, *E.5-F.5.*
MIN CHAUNG . . . . . Map 25.
MINBU . . . . . . Map 7, *J.3.*
MINBYA . . . . . . Map 28.
MINGALADON . . . . Map 7, *N.5.*
MOGAUNG . . . . . Map 7, *D.5.*
MOGOK . . . . . . Map 7, *G.5.*
MOHNYIN . . . . . Map 7, *E.5.*
MOKPALIN . . . . . Map 7, *M.5.*
MOLO . . . . . . Map 7, *F.5.*
MOMAUK . . . . . Map 7, *E.6.*
MONG MIT . . . . . Map 7, *F.5.*
MONYWA . . . . . Map 7, *G.4.*
MOULMEIN . . . . . Map 7, *N.6.*
MOUNT POPA . . . . Map 7, *J.4.*
MOUNT VICTORIA . . . Map 7, *H.2.*
MOYINGYI RESERVOIR . . . Map 32.
MU RIVER . . . Map 7, *F, G, & H.4.*
MYAUNGMYA . . . . Map 7, *N.3.*
MYEBON . . . . . . Map 7, *J.2.*
MYINBU . . . . . . . Map 4.
MYINGUN . . . . . Map 7, *J.4.*
MYINGYAN . . . . . Map 7, *H.4.*
MYINMU . . . . . . Map 7, *H.4.*
MYITKYINA . . . . . Map 7, *D.6.*
MYITKYO . . . . . Map 7, *M.5.*
MYITNGE . . . . . Map 7, *H.5.*
MYITNGE RIVER . . . Map 7, *H.5.*
MYITSON . . . . . . Map 7, *F.5.*
MYITTHA RIVER . . Map 7, *F, G, & H.3.*
MYOHAUNG . . . . Map 7, *J.2.*
MYOTHIT . . . . . Map 7, *E.6.*
MYOTHIT . . . . . Map 7, *J.4.*


## N


NAAF RIVER . . . . . Map 3.
NAGA HILLS . . . . Map 7, *D.3.*
NALONG . . . . . . Map 7, *E.6*
NAMHKAM . . . . . Map 7, *F.6.*
NAMHPAKKA . . . . Map 7, *F.6.*
NAMTI . . . . . . . Map 19.
NAMTU . . . . . . Map 7, *F.6.*
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